A QUALITATIVE APPROACH TO MEASURING INCLUSION

THESIS

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Abstract

Diversity and inclusion (D&I) programs in the United States Air Force (USAF) continue to face challenges to leveraging practices that can improve unit performance. Despite the known benefits of diversity and inclusion, the USAF as an enterprise has not consistently offered a clear and unbiased assessment of organizational inclusiveness. The purpose of this research was to develop a model to measure the inclusiveness of an organization and leverage its results to help identify areas of weakness and improve performance. The research questions were addressed by reviewing the existing literature and conducting a three-round Delphi study. In total, twenty-five field experts from across the Department of Defense (DoD) participated in the Delphi study.

The research initially identified eight indicators of an inclusive environment, which was reduced to six after clarifying overlapping terms. These six indicators describe the features apparent in an inclusive environment; experts validated these indicators which constitute the base categories in the initial model. Throughout the first and second Delphi rounds, the experts added five more, totaling eleven indicators that are present in an inclusive environment. The highlight of this research was the development of a model to measure a unit's inclusivity and a framework to address possible areas of management intervention. Ultimately, the researcher provided recommendations for unit leaders across an organization to utilize the developed tool and discussed opportunities for further research.

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Heston John D. Lubiano

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I. Introduction

Background

Any organization with a population embodying differences needs to know how to leverage inclusion in order to captivate untapped resources of skill, talent, and creativity. Doing so helps to enhance group productivity, promote individual performance, and identify critical organizational aspects. By recognizing common signs that make up the virtue of an inclusive environment, management could adequately assess the organization's overall climate. This research seeks to provide leaders the awareness on possible indicators to assess and improve inclusion.

With the resources allotted to manage the United States military personnel and D&I programs across the Department of Defense (DoD), measuring inclusion and using the results to enhance unit performance may appear as an easy report to deliver. Multiple articles readily available on the Defense Technical Information Center (DTIC) and other various journal publications elaborate different strategies and policies regarding demographic information. According to the Council on Foreign Relations, the composition of minority enlisted members was reported to be 56 percent of women and 43 percent of men in 2016 (Reynolds and Shendruck, 2018). The 2016 demographic report also mentioned that the difference on gender ratio consistently appear on female recruits. However, reports on demographics composition do not capture the true essence of diversity and inclusion. Concentrating on the demographic figure could overlook the potential mechanism to leverage the real value of inclusion in unit performance.

Furthermore, reports based solely on racial numbers neglect areas of management that could benefit from effective diversity policies developed through factors of inclusion. Most of the policies for diversity and inclusion currently active in the United States Air Force are focused on demographics and do not capture the true scope of diversity (Bearman et al., 2017). Presently, a vast amount of organizations across the USAF still rely on diversity reports based on physical attributes.

The consciousness to produce useful information from effectively evaluating a unit's inclusiveness could perhaps root from the necessity to address the growing diverse population of the organization. As the human population grows larger, society receives more significant exposure to different groups of people with a distinctive background, levels of physical and mental abilities, age, and other human characteristics that may display uniqueness from each other. With the constant change and addition to the population, we can make a safe assumption that human interaction or human behavior changes along with the population growth in a society. Reaching an optimal approach to managing diversity and inclusion helps organizations to stay productive. The DoD certainly has no immunity from changes during organizational growth. Increasing cultural differences, individualities, generation gaps, and traditional group interaction deserve significant attention to appropriately accommodate implications in group cohesiveness vital to the military. Additionally, managing diversity creates inclusive practices that have proven beneficial to a company's growth and innovation. According to Yolanda Conyers of Lenovo Foundation, D&I continues to help the company support customers from 120 countries (Gupta, 2018).

According to Mor Barak (2017) companies employing workers from different backgrounds and racial attributes reap the benefits on acquiring the variety of skills, reaching untapped cognitive resources, extending markets, and essentially attracting new businesses. Perhaps the second nature of these benefits convert to higher company profits and can function as a factor that helps economically by extending jobs to the underrepresented or the disadvantaged. Other scholarly articles and private company testaments also claim benefits on unit performance from diversity and inclusion. Collective ideas, objectivity for decision proofing, innovation, workplace attractiveness, and sound analytical thinking are just a few examples of domestic intangible outcomes making diversity and inclusion relevant in any organization (Gompers et al., 2018). Corresponding to the beneficial factors of diversity and inclusion, Air Force Equal Opportunity policies can also serve as the fundamental driver of the need to create an all-inclusive workplace.

The DoD understands the importance of having diversity and inclusive culture in an organization. The DoD's Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan affirms the importance of an enriched inclusive workplace to attract and retain top performers and improve the military's effectiveness. The USAF under the guidance of DoD looks to maintain and foster an inclusive culture to continue enhancing its ability to perform its missions. Through inclusion, it will provide the organization with a variety of new and enhanced skills, and other abilities that an organization would otherwise not realize (SEG, 2013). The affirmation of D&I in the military service solidifies the demand on effectively and efficiently assessing a unit's inclusiveness. Though the realization of needing a method to measure inclusion could motivate unit leaders to cultivate diversity, finding available

assessment methods to utilize in leveraging the benefits of diversity appeared to be a challenge.

The USAF must create a balanced approach that seizes indicators addressing visible signs of inclusivity and inductively develop the measurement. As an example, Gallup Incorporation, a private firm, offers diversity and inclusion development services to companies aiming to leverage their mixed population. Gallup provides models capable of recognizing the benefits of diversity inside an organization, as well as creating strategies for top leaders in implementing courses of action to specific areas that may receive value from diversifying its workforce (Gallup, 2016). However, Gallup and other firms appealing their organizational models tend to focus on expanding diversity. Being diverse does not necessarily equate to inclusiveness. For example, a company may have varied demographics, yet an exclusive preferential practice towards a specific group indicates an apparent absence of inclusion. Therefore, limitations to measuring inclusion still exist in the USAF's D&I programs. The lack of a validated method also implies that demographic reports cannot merely measure inclusion in an organization and that accurately assessing inclusion requires more focused research.

Bearman et al.'s (2017) research on leveraging diversity suggest that there are two dimensions of diversity: cognitive and demographic. Human characteristics such as personalities, intelligence, and personal experiences embody the potential categories to measure diversity and assess inclusion (Bearman et al., 2017). Assigning a certain score for each attribute could produce the qualitative data points, assuming that each person will have to participate and will be the sole source of data. The proposed process to measure diversity and inclusion through points association with human characteristics

may hold an acceptable methodology. However, this method contains inherent challenges, considering the latitude of human personalities, intelligence, and experience, as well as the complexities of each characteristic. Determining indicators of inclusiveness in a holistic approach would develop a better model by capturing more accurate qualities, while scoping the broadness of diversity and inclusion. Sourcing data through qualitative methods may also impose more valuable inputs from a distinct category and limit individual point errors originating from participants with subjective views on human characteristics.

Other available models obtaining indicators of inclusion through emerging themes claimed to be more effective in data gathering and provided proof of successes in assessing inclusion. According to the Inclusion Index TM developed by April and Blass (2010), a framework consisting of ten factors of inclusion produced valuable insight of an organization inhibiting inclusive practices and direct efforts to improve inclusivity in certain areas. April and Blass claim their Inclusion Index to offer significant statistical evidence to show if an organization hosts and enjoys an inclusive environment for the members. Similar to the Inclusion Index, some United States Government agencies utilize the New Inclusion Quotient (New IQ) (Bearman et al., 2017). Both frameworks operate in identifying factors making up inclusivity in a company and equally obtaining information used to develop needed courses of action towards cultivating diversity and inclusion. However, neither model bridges the inclusion results in enhancing organizational performance. An all-inclusive organization does not automatically perform optimally. Therefore, it is vital for USAF leaders to possess a method capable of measuring inclusion and adequately leverage diversity in enhancing the military's

effectiveness and performance. The USAF and the DoD as a whole acquire data and develop programs for diversity and inclusion from demographic reports that are inadequate to highlight any real value.

Following the concept of determining themes that emerge from an inclusive environment, it recommends a probing approach to develop the fundamentals of this research' inclusion model. Also, acquiring new indicators or any additional signs of inclusiveness from the field experts will assist this research to validate and polish the proposed framework. Besides using theoretical perspectives on management and leadership, this research ultimately seeks to explore and inductively provide a collaborative outcome. The early stages of this study modified the definition of inclusion provided by HQ USAF Office of Personnel and Manpower's Diversity and Inclusion Division (HAF/AIV) in order to offer a more explicit description of inclusion and to better assist in searching for visible signs that make up an organization with an inclusive environment. These indicators served as the basis of methodology on developing the Delphi questions and provided the data for the inclusion model. The construct of inclusion explored in this research defined inclusion as "the process of creating a culture where all members of an organization are free to make their fullest contribution to the success of the group regardless of the members' background, gender, age, ethnicity, and physical capabilities." The provided definition sets leaders' awareness on determining inclusive environment indicators.

Problem Statement

Because of the USAF's forward-looking stance toward cultivating diversity and leveraging the benefits of inclusivity to improve performance, USAF leaders require a tangible tool to effectively measure inclusion.

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to develop an instrument to measure inclusion in order to provide USAF leaders data that captures the real essence of an inclusive environment.

Research Question (RQ)

How can USAF leaders measure inclusion to determine an organization's inclusive climate?

Investigative Question (IQ)

What indicators describe an inclusive environment?

Methodology

A literature review was conducted and the Delphi method were used to answer the research question and gathered the research data. D&I experts holding leadership and management positions across the DoD reviewed and validated the revealed inclusion indicators from the examined literature, as well as added peer, solicited factors not found in the review. Journal articles, government and private sector D&I presentation slides, recommended measurements of inclusion, and DoD demographic reports were gathered

from research databases and field experts. Identifying organizational concepts, theories, and keywords encompassing inclusion revealed the indicators that embody an inclusive culture and address the investigative questions.

In addition, the Delphi method explored the investigative question through a web-based approach completed by the pool of experts. The selected group included professionals holding positions such as D&I directors, Equal Opportunity staff, USAF HQ personnel managers, and unit leaders with years of experience leading and managing diverse members. Mr. Michael Owen of the Air Force Material Command (AFMC) Diversity and Inclusion program facilitated an access to the appropriate sources of expert wisdom and experience. To generate the qualitative data, the researcher first cross-referenced indicators from each round of questionnaires to regulate overlapping concepts and meanings. Along with the initial set of indicators from the first round, the demographic questions helped acquire the experts' background representation. The second round of analysis introduced the combined list of indicators from the experts' contributions. Decisively, the inductive data emerging in the third round uncovered the final set of indicators, matching the experts' consensus, and enabled the development of a method to measure inclusion in the USAF.

Limitations

A general application of the results could impose some restriction considering the limitations of a Delphi methodology. Attending a private conference on diversity and inclusion broadened the entire research's respective and clarified the concept of inclusivity. However, the focus on opinions of experts as military members and other stakeholders in the military environment automatically undertakes venue control and

compromises populous general representation. Additionally, research participants could

have contributed replies with presumed bias regarding a specific group or strong beliefs

to certain indicators that may not necessarily display an overall factor. Devoting multiple

rounds in the research and applying specific statistical techniques mitigated possible

attraction bias towards an indicator and clarified exploration outcomes.

Assumptions

This research assumes the emerging indicators from the literature to be strong

qualities of an inclusive environment and purposely expounds the investigative questions.

Additionally, the study assumes inclusiveness to contribute leveraging value to unit

performance. Lastly, the study assumed that all participants were experts in D&I and

provided authentic responses without leaning heavily on a particular indicator based on

personal attachments to the subject.

Implications

Developing a concrete tool by measuring an abstract concept bares complexity in

its process. Multiple articles found in this research discussed the benefits of having a

diverse organization, while many consulting companies offer several ways to measure

inclusion (Gallup, 2016). However, the contributions to D&I revolve around exclusively

nourishing the social aspect of both notions. Given that the literature review rarely

encountered inclusion measurements purposely linking performance and featuring

inclusion as a valuable input, this research will reveal convincing indicators of inclusion

that will serve as categorical themes generating qualitative data imperative to endorse the results statistically.

The results will produce the fundamental base capable of introducing tangible value from determining the effectiveness of an organization's inclusive practices. Additionally, identifying key areas that need more inclusivity will ultimately frame the influence of inclusion on a unit's performance. Finally, leaders in the USAF and other practitioners in the realm of D&I will be able to show actual reports representing diversity and inclusion, sufficiently describe the climate of an organization, recommend changes with observable effects, and navigate cross-organizational leadership and management boundaries.

Summary

This chapter summarizes the research background, problem statement, purpose, research and investigative questions, methodology, assumptions, limitations, and the implications of a qualitative approach to the indicators measuring inclusion in the USAF. In the next section, the researcher examined different pieces of literature that provide exclusive insights on inclusion and the other attempts at evaluating diversity and inclusion. Next, Chapter III will then explain in depth the information gathering from the literature and the utilization of the Delphi method to assemble the overall data in order to perform this study. Chapter IV will discuss findings and general results from the data analysis. Finally, chapter V will incorporate a summary of recommendations, developed conclusion, and areas possibly warranting future research to help scope other implications and the continued development of the inclusion model.

<center>**II. Literature Review**</center>

Introduction

        Dialogues on inclusion and diversity often evoke skepticism, uneasy reactions, or sometimes a level of apprehension to avoid continuing the conversation. These odd emotions probably extend their roots to different interpretations, meanings, undesirable experiences about the topic, or just a narrow understanding of concepts around the subject, therefore limiting a person's motivation to truly engage in a more fruitful discussion and avoid further perceived conflict. A similar claim stands in the way of developing methods to measure diversity and inclusion in an organization. Time after time organizations change procedures addressing diversity and inclusion programs in considerations to the ever-changing customer base (Big Think Edge, 2017), perhaps because methods used continually show inconsistencies or even ineffectiveness. There are numerous works of literature addressing the benefits of diversity and effectiveness of an inclusive environment (Ferdman et al, 2010). However, techniques measuring inclusivity in an organization and how to leverage inclusion to help generate better organizational performance seldom appear in any journal.

        Limitation on access to the available instructions developed by private companies also confines the military's ability to attempt in measuring inclusion. More than likely, consulting companies specializing in organizational behavior keep these methods proprietary, and rightfully so, judging by the complexity in assessing such qualitative matter. This research will help increase the literature in developing a method to measure an inclusive environment and leverage its results in the decision-making process of leaders and managers. By capturing indicators of an inclusive environment that different

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organizations share, and through inductive data gathered from the field experts, this study will assist in closing the gap in the literature. Available literature on what makes an organization appear inclusive and the experts' contributions guided the development of the inclusion model in this research. Keywords such as diversity, inclusion, workplace, performance, and measurements aided in collecting information. Articles emphasizing concepts that display an organization's inclusiveness comprised the applicable sources for this research.

Through the review of the available information on signs indicating an inclusive environment, six themes emerged. The first theme identified was that highly inclusive units exhibit a high tolerance in 'New Ideas are Welcome' which encourages sharing new thoughts. Second, an established robust 'Feedback System' for new ideas ensuring the swift interchange of positions/philosophies from both the top-down and laterally in the organizational structure indicates an inclusive workplace. Third, a 'Conflict Resolution Plan' to diffuse negative tensions from opposing viewpoints and attitudes institutes a factor assisting inclusivity to flourish. The fourth emerging theme, 'Groupthink Assessment' ensures a sensible decision, evaluates routine, and places corrective measures to negate narrow group making decision process. Additionally, it encourages individual to retain responsibility on their thoughts and actions. The fifth category describes 'High Recruitment and Steady Retention Rate,' which employees and job seekers desire for employers to consider having in order for the company to display an inclusive workplace. Lastly, 'Fellowship,' aside from salary, benefits, incentives, status, and the need of employment, is valued by employees seeking to commit to long-term employment because of the sense of camaraderie and belonging in a team.
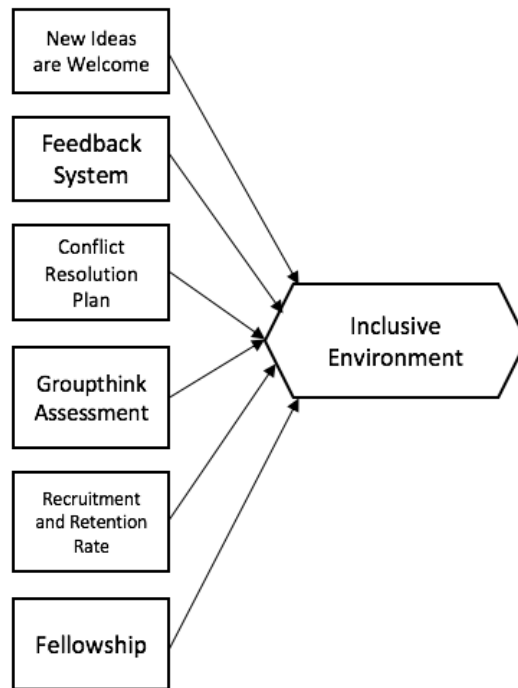
Figure 1. Overview of the emerging indicators describing an inclusive environment from the literature review

New Ideas are Welcome

In the study conducted on positive climate for diversity by Groggins and Ryan (2013), a quality inspiring a robust favorable climate for diversity could emerge through individual or organizational attitudes on openness to change, to people, to errors, and the preconceived fit of a person on his or her surroundings. Additionally, competency describes the company's ability to adapt to change, interpersonal proficiency, and the actual person to their environment fit (Groggins & Ryan, 2013). Both premises revolving around a positive attitude towards openness suggest that welcoming new ideas promotes inclusiveness and in turn displays the indication of an inclusive environment. Acknowledging new ideas and recognizing the potential of creativeness to turn into great

designs celebrates effective communication while ultimately emphasizing the impact of inclusion on organizational performance (Graham, 2018). An environment striving to accommodate new or different perspectives focuses on the actual mechanism constituting inclusiveness. Groggins and Ryan (2013) also pointed in the same study that a company with a favorable climate treats accommodation as a rule and not as an exception, thus helping them to be the positive reception for change.

Welcoming new ideas may also lead to forming a mindset recognizing alternative ways to complete a task, which companies with inclusive environment tend to embody. As an example, in the video gaming world mostly dominated by males, a new game culture initiating a gender-supportive community is cultivating better performance of female gamers while fostering their learning space of gaming into another level (Richard & Gray 2018). While the focus of their study orbits on empowering women, the authors contend a new approach to integrate a minority populace into a space traditionally enjoyed by only one gender; this arouses a visible indicator of a whole industry. The similar indication also extends to the academic setting: The Communication Education journal strongly encourages their authors and contributors to value the different research processes of non-academic writers on topics similarly investigated by scholars (De La Mare & Daniel, 2016). Expanding the range of their methodologies in writing captures a more complex perspective and attains broader information for the readers. This approach represents 'new ideas' or a 'different approach' showing potential benefits in the education setting.

Another article within academia stressing inclusive pedagogy written by Gunn et al. (2004) concentrates on early childhood education. In their article, the authors

explained how to handle a discourse by embracing it as an instrument in numerous ways to accept individuals' and groups' opposing attitudes and beliefs (Gunn et al., 2004). Teachers in childhood education described in the article shared a big barrier regarding the difficulty to cultivate diversity and inclusion. To provide more guidance on how educators can address the complexity of inclusion in early childhood education, Gunn et al. (2004) constructed an all-encompassing perspective by collecting inclusive teaching practices combined with the inclusive practices used in other fields or settings by the same educators. The study concluded with specific general teaching techniques promoting effects on childhood education. In addition, some educational activities invoking slight effects may extend to good future research (Gunn et al., 2004). Even though this childhood education article concentrates on tackling early inclusion techniques, the authors' creative take on their study illustrated the significance of incorporating new ideas.

Management literature also underlined the accommodation of new ideas as a prominent factor making an environment inclusive, as described by Miller in his 1999 article titled *Leadership Roundtable the Four Management Practices Positively Influencing Creativity at Work*. One of the managerial practices describes the consequence of a working group: assembling people exposes members to the diversity of thoughts and entices mutual respect on others opinion (Miller, 1999). This management theory could also exemplify a leadership quality in an organization. Miller's article mainly emphasized managerial practices.; however, with the intention of assembling people to generate open dialogues, which presumably exposes the members to new

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notions, it is important to note that new ideas in management establish the validity of inclusiveness.

Feedback System

Coinciding with welcoming new ideas as an indication of an inclusive environment is a robust 'Feedback System' in place to ensure ideas are not only heard but drive a reaction to broaden their value. According to the social aspect of Learning Theory, a dialogue between teachers and students is a fundamental interaction in empowering students to improve their learning capacity. It also highlights the recognition of teachers to take such necessary actions (Vygotsky, 1978). Social culture theory could explain the reason why the highly inclusive environment expresses feedback procedure as an effective communication system (Duchaine et al., 2011). Duchaine et al. studied the effect of performance feedback as an auxiliary tool for teacher coaching in an acclaimed inclusive high school classroom. Feedback was used as a way to surge behavior-specific praise statements (BSPS) assuming that it decreases the time intervals on task completion. By measuring the frequency of BSPS and on-task intervals, the study revealed a level of training effectiveness through feedbacks.

A group of teachers even indicated the value of feedback as an acceptable substance of professional development (Duchaine et al., 2011). Having a system accommodating change can also promote a positive attitude to the feedback and develop a mindset to keep the feedback system effective (Groggins & Ryan, 2013). Groggins and Ryan (2013) also suggested a case-by-case basis in performing feedback in order to meet the member's specific needs. Supervisors in management recognize a feedback system also shows organizational support that even validates ideas without merit (Miller 1999).

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Managerial practice with high regard in feedback systems seems to emerge as a definite quality of management in an inclusive organization.

Feedback systems also occur in an all-inclusive university; some would consider that such a form of communication efficiently addresses the complexities of an increasingly heterogeneous student body. The Department of Social Work, Faulda University, Germany conducted a study introducing a feedback delivery using audio files. Knauf (2016) understood that other ways of giving feedback could motivate the younger generation of students to incorporate feedback into their learning styles to help improve academic performance. The author found several students assimilated better after receiving the new and seemingly unconventional way. The researchers tested both the audio file and written report; while some preferred the traditional writing mode, others discover the audio version easier to adapt and even felt greater meaning interpersonally than a paper report (Knauf, 2016). Acquiring positive results from a non-traditional feedback method asserts a degree of effectiveness and an additional technique to convey mentorship in a diverse populous benefiting from an inclusive practice.

Management in any organization plays a vital role in enforcing a feedback system to maintain environment inclusiveness. Members tend to develop a sense of openness to learn when provided with constructive feedback because new skills are introduced (Geddes & Baron, 1997). Parallel sentiments drew from collecting employees' diverse thoughts, especially when management deems this process as a managerial priority. In a more recent study from a Canadian award-winning lead communicator on a diversity and inclusion campaign successfully engages the topic to her clients holding top leadership positions. Wade (2018) mentioned diversity in the absence of inclusion will only result in

a company being outperformed by competitors, as well as lower employee engagement, poor communication, and probable loss of profits. Wade's statement acknowledges the importance of leveraging a feedback system capable of housing an inclusive organizational culture. In her article, *D&I Communication for Global Organizations*, Wade stresses the importance of embracing employee feedbacks to achieve success on creative accounts that are difficult to manage as well as improving organizational interactions (2018). She also mentioned other guidance for company leaders to follow in order to identify gaps in diversity and appropriately communicate signals of change to all members. As part of the editorial's conclusion, Wade offered advice for managers who desire to leverage D&I and recognize the uniqueness of diversity and feature inclusive practices as a valuable management process. This research finds the author's overall perspective on the feedback system as a useful tool in management and an interactive platform supportive of the concept of inclusion.

The available literature on a feedback system as an inclusive environment indicator mainly explains the relevance of providing and receiving feedback. Thus far, this literature review bears the scarcity of feedback-inclusiveness connection. However, despite its limitation, actual feedback frequency in a workplace expands the writings on Feedback System and could support the concept on inclusive practices. A writer for 'Journal of Leadership Studies John Wiley & Sons Inc,' identified a significant impact of actual feedback occurrences in the workplace. Top performers, particularly the younger generation (so-called millennials), habitually get ignored after recognizing their achievement. The statement implies that leaders or managers often devote more attention and effort to those underperformers in hope to bring them closer in performance to the

star players or at the least assist them to reach the standards. Popular belief explains that top performers particularly strive in response to a challenge. Therefore, limiting engagement towards them will drive curiosity to boredom or dissatisfaction and could, in turn, lead them to look for the challenge elsewhere (Osburn, 2014). Penny (2011) cited Tulgan in a symposium paper, stating leaders should recurrently feed high-speed employees with sufficient guidance instead of leaving them in total independence. Osburn and Penny both reiterated the implications of inadequate feedback, and in doing so, research extracted the association of feedback frequency by maintaining the organization's discipline on continuing to involve top performers. The given attention on the importance of receiving and providing feedback, along with the added emphasis on the regularity of feedback exchange, indicates the presence of a feedback system as an inclusive practice.

Conflict Resolution Plan

Every organization experiences conflict, while proposing new ideas or debunking orthodox practices allows opposing views to meet and, at times, it causes people or groups to clash. Some conflict could bear fruitful outcomes, innovative processes, and ultimately a deeper understanding of the given subject. Opposite outcomes from conflict could illustrate violence, destruction, and at the least a continued tension from misunderstandings. However, despite the spectrum of conflict outcomes, organizations understand the concern of possessing a conflict resolution plan to mitigate the negative implications of opposing views. Perhaps an environment with a capable system to control disagreements and guide the opposing views into positive results would promote the members' sense of organized atmosphere, freedom to engage, and a level of safety.

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Groggins and Ryan (2013) made a similar point by stating that respect to

differences promotes everyday interactions, interpersonal skills, and openness to ideas.

When respecting differences becomes a necessary practice instead of an act of kindness

inconsistently played, it leads people to develop social competence and welcoming

mentality (Groggins & Ryan, 2013). The concept of properly handling different

ideologies emerged through in this literature review on organizations exhibited an

inclusive environment. Political settlement can arguably attest as a great source of

conflict, yielding either negative or positive outcomes. Even within the walls of a

political forum, levering inclusion through conflict management could induce settlements

from all political parties and pass an all-inclusively made policy. On a study about

political settlements in the United Kingdom, Bell and Pospisil (2017) examined the

transition of conflict to agreements. The authors' examination led to an outcome of

formalized political unsettlement, meaning political and legal institutions continue to

negotiate while setting a temporary fix instead of a tangible closing result (Bell &

Pospisil, 2017). Also, their study on formalized political unsettlement found

inclusiveness as the critical driver in navigating the transitions from conflict to an

understanding. Bell and Pospisil (2017) valued inclusion as the unlocking opportunity for

politicians, elites, and society to break through clashes. Their overall investigation

revolved around the subject of formalized political unsettlement; nevertheless, the study

acknowledges conflict management as an indicator of an inclusive setting.

Another published journal indicating conflict resolution as a valuable trait of an

inclusive environment surfaces in validating alternative dispute resolution courses in

Business Schools. Decision making in business, as mentioned earlier, involves clashes of

interest leading to a probable dispute. When money becomes the primary issue, some people may automatically revert to litigation as the main action addressing a conflict. The impulse to litigate may not necessarily provide the optimal solution; perhaps others could reason that lawsuits only make problems worse. This vital aspect of management may have led the integration of conflict management courses in business and management degrees. Neslund's paper in 1988 refuted the inclusion of alternative dispute resolution in the business degree curriculum for all business schools. The paper demonstrated several reasons for managers to learn alternative actions but, ultimately, it argued the relevance of avoiding the litigation approach (Neslund, 1988). Even though Neslund's (1988) journal emphasized the inclusion of conflict resolution to business schools' curriculum, this review finds the literature on an alternative dispute in business school to support the concept of conflict resolution having its place in an organization desiring to claim inclusiveness.

To enumerate another report on conflict management in an inclusive environment, Cornell University emphasizes healthy outcomes of managing conflicts properly. In 2016, the Graduate School of Management at Cornell University launched an eight-session elective course titled "Dialogue Across Differences" (Johnson School of Management, Cornell, 2016). The course aims to teach how to reap the benefits of diversity by moving past the discomfort of receiving different opinions and guiding the dialogue to fruitful results. Director Tim McCray of the school's Office of Diversity and Inclusion stated in the same article that the course could promote meaningful discussions, self-awareness, and the ability to respond to disagreements with an open mind (Johnson School of Management, Cornell, 2016). With this aim, Cornell University's article on

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conflict resolution supports the context describing an inclusive environment. The university concluded the article by promoting the elective course profusely, but the review for this literature on a class course noted the position of conflict management in a diverse setting.

Expanding the literature support on conflict resolution as an indicator of an inclusive environment specifically to international negotiations seldom appeared throughout the research. However, the 'Civil Society and Peace Negotiations: Confronting Exclusion' (2008) journal offered an example of an inclusive environment exhibiting conflict management in an international decision-making process and the sustainability of the made decision. Wanis-St. John and Kew (2008) wrote the article describing the correlation of including local civil society participation in international negotiations and its effectiveness and program sustainability in the local society. According to the article, a society with a local group actively participating in an international peace negotiation experienced a longer sustained peace time compared to cases that did not include a concerning civil society. In either case, Wanis-St. John and Kew (2008) suggested future research on other types of civil society actors that could be of value to an international negotiation table. Part of the conclusion reiterated the strong association of civil society involvement with international talks as an effective conflict resolution plan and an approach to maintain inclusiveness in the higher forum.

Groupthink Assessment

Teams develop in the presence of unity, commitment to a common goal, and a level of conformity. A group often thrives because of the synchronization of each member, of their processes, and ultimately on how they think. To a certain extent, an odd

perspective would prefer a group to think in unison to accomplish the task at hand. However, when heterogeneous thinking passes an absolute ceiling of productivity, there emerges a resistance to new ideas the flow of diverse thoughts can be filtered as members fall into the trap of groupthink. Furthermore, groupthink could decrease the benefits of diversity by neglecting to leverage the moral and economic effects of inclusion. In addition to the 'new ideas' mentioned earlier, De La Mare & Daniel (2016) also discussed the need for the writers in their field to focus on the complexity of communication when integrating new ideas from an outsider perspective. Understanding the intricacy of hailing outside perspective into the group could cultivate an inclusive subject field (De La Mare & Daniel, 2016). With this intention, an in-place assessment preventing groupthink advocates such a system as an indication of an inclusive environment.

A corporate study on gender diversity provides an additional perspective on tracking possible groupthink during the decision-making process and the strategy of putting it in place to avoid biased actions. Although the study focuses on gender diversity demographics among corporate board members, the literature warrants discussion as it addressed minimizing or overcoming groupthink as an inclusive approach. Kamalnath (2017) analyzed the gender diversity of board members in a specific organization; the inquiry specifically reviewed the effect of integrating female board members to challenge the dominant view during the decision process. The author considered the assumption that the female board members carry similar credentials from their counterparts and potentially hold different opinions. These are essential characteristics of the members in order to determine the effects of groupthink prevention based on gender diversity. The

paper examined board roles, their decision-making process, the dilemma of groupthink, and the possible solution to overcome groupthink in the premise of gender differences. The overall report asserted the inclusion of gender diversity in corporate boards could assist overcoming groupthink when the female board members hold different perspectives and independently generate their sentiments. Kamalnath (2017) also extends more research infusing other factors such as race, level of education, and professional background to determine similar benefits in preventing groupthink.

Another aspect of decision-making from an experiment on deep-level diversity concentrating on congruence between knowledge and decision rules provides support to groupthink prevention as an indicator of an inclusive workplace. Rink and Ellemers (2010) controlled the differences and similarities in personal decision rules and task information in a group with two members operating as one versus a group of three members. The authors indicated the presence of diversity in the three-person team led to them reporting their distinct wisdom and decision process into an inclusive collaboration producing a significant level of results; this outcome was compared to the dyad group, which caused patterns offering different information but eventually endorsing parallel decision rules yielding only satisfactory results (Rink and Ellemers, 2010). This study recognizes the experiment's relevance in highlighting groupthink prevention.

The field of law also adds an exciting spin towards groupthink. Centered on popular belief, legislation and judicial fields strongly embody the firm stance to the only function based on truth, or at the least practice truth-seeking processes. Although, it is not unusual to see both judicial and legislative outcomes based on a questionable interpretation of facts. Paulsen (2014) explained the universal consensus on the value of

intellectual diversity and the reasons for cultivating its concept not only in law school but in any field consisting of a diverse body. However, Paulsen also offered twisting opinions towards intellectual diversity and challenged its essential position to feature intellectual truth as the primary concept of seeking answers or solutions in an academic institution, especially in the field of law. This appraisal assumes the intellectual truth referred in his study hinted comparable features of groupthink, which diversity of opinions or different approaches fell short in action or completely neglected to exercise.

Even with the current public perspective on intellectual diversity, such as openness to new ideas, rigorous discussion of views, academic debates, and active trials against the uniformity of thoughts, Paulsen counters the consensus by insisting on intellectual truth as the object of intellectual inquiry. This assertion nullifies intellectual diversity as the prime instrument to establish facts. This counter-argument favors in research methods such as experiments, historical data, grouping information with significant associations, and overall mutual understanding of an academic subject. Intellectual truth characterizes the valid methods of seeking and ultimately attaining tangible results while asserting a solid foundation of usage, especially in law school. However, the author concluded that the academic community often fantasizes intellectual diversity without properly evaluating its purpose and justification. Intellectual diversity effectively works when the need to override intellectual truth arises and only when a presented intellectual truth seemed to forewarn an error. Otherwise, intellectual diversity under the modern liberalism identifies as a tactic to supersede facts (Paulsen, 2014).

Paulsen's paper presented objectivity in solely relying upon the process of inclusiveness to accept different perspectives, which stands acceptable. Given that the

position of the author's paper sides with skepticism towards diversity of thought in law school, it is worth noting that intellectual diversity and the integration of different views contending the rigidity of groupthink encompasses a trait of an inclusive environment. Consequently, preventing groupthink could lead to attracting others in joining an organization and organically retain members to longer commitments.

High Recruitment Steady Retention

Similar to the previously mentioned indicators of an inclusive environment, specific works of literature addressing recruitment and retention solely featuring inclusivity revealed shortly on availability. Nonetheless, the available information with both diversity and inclusion illuminate signs of high recruitment and steady retention rate as a possible quality of an inclusive organization. Penny, in the same symposium journal describing 'feedback system' as an indicator of an inclusive culture, also promoted member retention strategies, such as accommodating conditions in the workplace and a generous reward system (2011). An organization desiring to recruit highly skilled personnel that could contribute more value to the group would benefit from these cited strategies, and screening job seekers from a diverse pool could transform high recruitment and steady retention into company hiring standards. In this context, an environment welcoming variety implies the outlook to attract and retain highly skilled personnel as well as the representation of an inclusive environment based on recruitment and retention.

A project on nursing workforce diversity also offered a supportive take on recruitment and retention. Recognizing a strategy to create an inclusive workforce

through diversifying the selection pipeline of any industry augments the perception of what appears as an inclusive environment. The project on nursing workforce designed a recruitment and retention strategy for the underrepresented and disadvantaged population to help increase the insufficient number of diverse healthcare professionals, especially nurses. The medical industry, like other businesses, recognizes the importance of acquiring a highly inclusive staff to attend the demand of various patients effectively. Therefore, Murray et al. (2016) rationalized providing high school students with a pre-professional curriculum that will prepare aspiring nurse students for admissions into a nursing program. The assumption in promoting the nurse industry in early education, where the stage for underrepresented minorities and disadvantaged backgrounds are grander, implies an ability to make an impact on future diverse nursing workforce numbers. According to the study, all twenty-one high school students, comprising different ethnic backgrounds enrolled in the pre-professional nursing education program elected to continue on an actual nursing program after graduating from high school and successfully passed the nursing licensure examination (Murray et al., 2016). Further, grants for a nursing program allocated explicitly for minority students aided on retaining nurse candidates into the program. This literature review in the nursing workforce highlighted how an early program integration affects recruitment and how an active retention strategy can achieve promising results in cultivating diversity. The researcher acknowledges the inclusive virtue towards diversifying a profession that ultimately facilitates a diverse population. From the same field, another perception supporting the notion of recruitment and retention as an indicator of institutions practicing inclusiveness expands from a report on the diversity of participants in healthcare research.

A study on autism for children reported the lack of minority representation in the subject area according to the United States Department of Health and Human Services that monitors the policy on inclusion of women and minorities in clinical research (Zamora et al., 2016). One of the suggested reasons behind the underrepresentation of minorities in clinical research traces from the poor recruitment and retention program. Zamora et al. evaluated strategies to recruit Latinos for autism research participation and represent a minority population. On the evaluated strategies, the researchers found that a traditional and culture-specific approach proved successful in recruiting and retaining Latino participants in clinical research. Traditional and culture-specific care expresses a parent-centered approach in which parents convincingly decide for the child (Zamora et al., 2016). This literature from clinical research contributors mainly revolved on evaluating the effectiveness of different strategies in recruiting and retaining minority participants. However, through the lens of inclusion, the efforts to draw interest and maintain the participation of minorities emerged as a present indicator of an inclusive environment.

Perhaps one of the unique perspective sources on inclusion and how recruitment and retention appeal as a feature of an inclusive environment would stem from the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community (LGBT). To specify the setting, the LGBT community continues to advocate its inclusiveness attribute to academic institutions across the nation. On the article *Institutions Must Ensure the Inclusion of the LGBT Community*, Ball (2013) enumerated recruitment and retention efforts as one of the eight inclusion best practices. In detail, a university can employ an LGBT orientation program in addition to campus orientation that will guide students with untraditional

sexual orientation or gender identity; to maintain students belonging to an LGBT group, the university could establish a mentorship program to guide the transition phase from high school to the college life (Ball, 2013). The author's elaboration on recruitment and retention efforts corresponds with other written articles indicating that an organizational custom such as this provides a fundamental foundation of inclusion and fairness. Given the LGBT's perspective, this publication posits recruitment and retention to meaningfully support inclusivity.

Fellowship

Workers or job seekers often entertain several reasons to consider before accepting a job offer and commit to extended employment status. Perhaps this explains why organizations leverage their retention strategy not only to attract highly skilled personnel but to eventually convince them on settling in and avoid entertaining outside contenders. Throughout the review of the literature on inclusion, the 'recruitment and retention' indicator appeared frequently and links retention and 'fellowship,' which workers commonly define as an interpersonal relation invoking a sense of belonging to a group. Besides compensation, benefits, and the need to earn a living, the feeling of belongingness transpires as a legitimate influence in selecting a job. Under this association, fellowship argues an adequate claim as an indicator of an inclusive environment.

A study on intellectual disability amongst working adults offered a valuable insight supporting the existence of fellowship as an important aspect of inclusion. Employment plays a vital role in adult living, especially adults considered to have intellectual and development disabilities (IDD). Between the common needs and

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requirements of occupation enabling us to sustain a daily existence, employment for people with IDD keeps an important function to social inclusion. Lysaght et al. (2016) analyzed the productivity experiences of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities through surveys and semi-structured interviews. In effort to optimize the real potential of inclusive practice on types of IDD's productivity, such as sheltered work, volunteer opportunities, and social enterprises, the authors found that through productivity, persons with IDD foster the feelings of belonging (Lysaght et al., 2016). Individuals who, in a workplace, feel like they belong with people around them acquire the sense of fellowship while enticing personal validation. The productivity of persons with IDD essentially opens another avenue for organizations and institutions to consider when the need for inclusion practices ascend. Bearing in mind the results of their research, 'Fellowship' may not stand as the central factor indicating an inclusive environment, but it dawdles in the same perspective because of its capacity as an inclusive practice.

Another perspective supporting the concept of fellowship in an inclusive environment can be traced from a facet of employee engagement. Some similarities explaining member engagement in the workplace relates to the sense of belonging and the work productivity mentioned beforehand. A review of a Gallup study titled *Well-being in the Workplace and Its Relationship to Business Outcomes* explains that to influence the level of engagement of employees, employers must actively welcome opinions and involve members when making decisions potentially affecting an individual (Harter et al., 2003). The authors indicated positive engagement of members supplying emotions prevalent to the realization of camaraderie from colleagues. Consequently,

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members feel included, thus forming an inclusive atmosphere. The article of Harter et al. implies the sense of fellowship with the notable depiction of an inclusivity environment.

An actual poll gauging factors that may make employees feel a sense of belonging supplements the theme of fellowship in the study's context on inclusion. In 2017, an online market of professional profiles, Linked In, claimed that diversity and inclusion programs may not effectively impact an organization if employers neglect to include belongingness as part of the equation. Therefore, Linked In surveyed possible factors affecting employees' sense of belonging in the workplace. On the thirteen factors presented, four factors materialized to clinch a significant value from the overall response. Huppert's survey results propose inclusion to become a habit and encourage employers to promote the sense of belonging in a diverse workplace sensitively. Employers need to recognize individual accomplishments, provide a space to voice their opinions, value contributions, and create a safe place to express the member's individuality freely (Huppert, 2017). Some of these factors, or perhaps all four, may already exist in a modern company. Under the pretense of Huppert's survey conducted in an organization with presumed diversity and inclusion, the poll finds belongingness to reveal factors supporting the definition of fellowship and proven with value in the literature review.

The sense of fellowship in the public perspective provides a new outlook towards an inclusive environment. Although focused on exploring the intercultural dynamics of a multicultural city, debates of the public population on what nationhood means in a multiethnic society warrants discussions on the importance of making a connection to endorse inclusiveness. Ash (2002) explained that negotiating differences in the local

setting presents possibilities of inter-culturalism, which leads the ability of the public to "interact fruitfully as equals" (pg. 960). In essence, when the leveled representation of multicultural local population flourishes, the sense of fellowship stimulates a national belonging. In the existence of commonality and its driving nature to build a rapport with a different ethnic background, Ash's article identified the relevance of mutuality and perhaps the concept of cultures cooperation with one another to construct inclusion. Additionally, the similarities of perception recognize inclusion from the public view and in a professional setting.

Summary

The indicators of an inclusive environment found in the works of literature review mark an appropriate base to start or continue dialogues on inclusion and diversity without feeling uneasy and the desire to avoid a complex issue. Even with skepticism, these indicators reflect a level of inclusiveness and could steer confusion or the misinterpretation of concepts to mutual understandings. Most important to the goal in measuring inclusion, these indicators provide substantial categories in the model development. This research addresses the gap in current methods of assessing inclusion in an organization. The six indicators reflecting an inclusive environment obtained from the review explain sufficient details to validate the relation with diversity and inclusion. Welcoming ideas, Feedback System, Conflict Resolution Plan, Groupthink Assessment, High Recruitment and Steady Retention Rate, and Fellowship all show presence in an inclusive environment.

III. Methodology

Chapter Overview

This chapter discusses the processes and themes applied to address the research question and the succeeding IQ elaborated in Chapter I. The rationale in accommodating the emerging indicators from both literature review and inductive method will be noted. Also, this chapter will fully describe implementing the Delphi technique to gather data, and then will finish with a summary.

Research Design

To deliver a robust and structured research, employing multiple rounds of Delphi technique supported this research's inductive reasoning through the exploratory trait of qualitative research that examines the emerging indicators. Scholars use qualitative research because of its multifaceted ability to set description and reveal explanations from a complex phenomenon. It enables researchers to understand new insights, gain fresh perspectives, and disclose problems dealing with the phenomena. Moreover, it corroborates theories by testing the legitimacy of models and the general application of concepts in reality; a qualitative inquiry could also evaluate processes and policies' effectiveness and efficiency (Denzin NK, 2000). Qualitative research respects all perspectives and intends to share the differences, similarities, and intricacies. To describe it modestly, researchers explore a multifarious occurrence without preconceived assumptions and pursue enlightenment through organic means.

Plenty of studies intend to determine the causality of an occurrence and examine the following orders of effects. Derived from the principle of physics, every movement, action, and event will associate a reaction; cause will always result an effect (Bergman et

al., 2004). Dating all the way back from 460-377 BC, Hippocrates of Cos stated that "every natural event has a natural cause" (Meadows, pg 12, 1987). However, even with these excerpts and concepts from current and past scholars, countless incidents in society would be better explained through exploratory actions, especially if the research seeks to explain the 'how' aspect of the phenomena instead of the 'what and why.' Perhaps it is the main reason why researchers use the qualitative approach as the ideal method to tackle a nonfigurative topic. According to Creswell (2014), authors plan or elect to use qualitative research because of its distinct features, such as: its fundamental capacity to naturally obtain the participants' perspectives, its ability to gather the main data through the responses, the flexibility of the research in a natural setting with the occurring phenomena, its reliance on the researcher's interpretation, and its extreme inductive factor. With the method's true purpose, qualitative research embraces an inductive practice, openness to the responses of all participants, and the main concept of understanding how a situation continues to occur rather than explaining 'why and what' affiliations.

There is no doubt that researchers continue to implement the qualitative approach in social science. The method's ability to integrate organizational behavior concepts and theories with several quantitative techniques makes qualitative research appealing to scholars. For example, one study analyzed the concepts, procedures, and measures to achieve worthiness in the nursing workforce in order to understand conflicting opinions, interpretations, use of concepts, and nursing abstractions (Graneheim et al., 2003). Graneheim et al.'s criteria to investigate elements of organizational and individual behavior fit the characteristics of what a qualitative research method is designed to

discover. Historically investigated, organizational behavior or human nature issues inherent within the social sciences derive the appropriateness for probing a phenomenon (Morgan & Smircich, 1908). Since human dynamics live in the setting of individual roles, social networks, cultural views, management, organizational practice, and leadership, a qualitative approach usually defines these abstracts and researchers optimally utilized this approach to significantly dig for deeper understandings in the complicated aspects of diversity and inclusion.

The qualitative research offers various designs to create the framework of collecting, analyzing and interpreting information. Commonly known designs to tackle issues in social sciences include the grounded theory, ethnography, case studies, narrative research, and phenomenology (Creswell, 2014). For this study, the researcher employed the Delphi method with a design structure similar from phenomenology and ethnography. Expanding on the method further, the Delphi was developed by Rand Corporation (1950) designed to seek the opinions of experts from the carefully developed set of questions. The research technique requires experts' anonymous representation and responses to prevent the effect of biases. After each round, the participants receive a mathematical form of feedback consequent with the group response. Questionnaires are repeated in multiple rounds to reduce the variation of responses; the end goal is to reach expert consensus or at the least as close to an agreement with empirical support. On certain occasions, opposing views are encouraged to be re-evaluated by the panelist (Hazen et al., 2014). Additionally, administrating the method kept no control above the participants' behavior. This research employed a web-based Delphi questionnaire to determine the indicators of an inclusive culture.

Validity and Reliability

Researchers frequently use the Delphi method with a perspective to develop the process organically, without preconceived notions, and carefully contextualize interpretations from the participants' reality. The validity of a Delphi method is often contended to overlook the scientific validation of the results and the dependability of measurements. However, by expounding on experience and wisdom of the experts, the Delphi method explicitly affirms its significance in undertaking circumstances without definite information (Thangaratinam & Redman, 2005). The methodological attention is dedicated to defining who is an expert, expert selection process, and participation size determination. Furthermore, anonymity, questionnaire design, a particular scoring scheme, feedback parameters, number of rounds, and consensus acquisition further assess validity of the Delphi method. With the method's results weighing on the interpretation of researchers, the general reliability of Delphi varies on the judgment of selecting the experts. Conversely, collecting and analyzing data through Delphi was supported by renowned studies, and the sound process of panelist identification solidifies the method's reliability (Yousuf, 2007). In addition, the Delphi's ability to use statistical analysis procedures decreases the likelihood of group pressure to conform.

To enhance confirmability of the research, the method required the implementation of multiple sets of data review throughout the Delphi rounds, making sure findings naturally reflect the participants and were consistently interpreted by the researcher. In practicing the reflexivity of qualitative research, any biases on interpretations from the findings such as personal attachment to a specific theme need visitations to further clarify meanings or context. Finally, the research included full

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definitions on key terms used, the design phase, and data collection procedures to ensure candidness in replicating the study.

Researcher's Role and Ethical Considerations

The qualitative research thrives in being spontaneous, in a way that research gradually materializes through inductive processes and constrains personal interests from influencing its discoveries. The researcher's role in this study mirrors an instrument in collecting and analyzing data in the most inductive way possible. In Dr. Simon's (2013) contribution to qualitative research, he explains that "data are mediated through this human instrument, rather than through inventories, questionnaires, or machines." It is also relevant to scrutinize any personal knowledge or understanding of the research topic in alignment to an impartial effort and instill objectivity throughout the research. Ethical concerns were also addressed in determination to conduct the research free of immoral procedures in respect to questions susceptible to any misinterpretation as inappropriate or projecting insensitivity to participants' background, age, gender, and other unique personal identifiers. In regard to the participants, this research verbally and in written format communicated clear purpose and desires in conducting the study and obtained Internal Review Board approval (see pg. 82) as well as an electronic consent to participate from all the contributors. All research materials, to include transcripts of the Delphi rounds, were made available and participants information remained anonymous.

Data Collection

Before engaging the Delphi, various articles, peer-reviewed journals, and diversity reports were initially gathered to identify inclusive indicators. As Creswell

suggested, "researchers collect data themselves through examining documents, observing behaviors, or interviewing participants" (pg. 185, 2014). Conducting a thorough review of the literature on diversity and inclusion facilitated initial responses for the investigative questions. At the beginning of the research, defining what an inclusive environment is played a vital role in seeking its indicators. Mentioned in Chapter I, this research continued with the construct of inclusion as "the process of creating a culture where all members of an organization are free to make their fullest contribution to the success of the group regardless of the members' background, gender, age, ethnicity, and physical capabilities." Twenty-six academic peer-reviewed journals specifically addressing diversity and inclusion were collected from sources such as the Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT) library & online, EBSCO host academic search database, Defense Technical Information Center (DTIC), Air University Publication, and Stanford Social Innovation articles. See **Table 15** for an overview of data gathering process.

Participants

As mentioned above, a key component on the Delphi reliability is the proper selection of the experts, as the results depend on their opinions. Choosing the right participants should derive from a thoughtful process, and the researcher must pick experts that match the study's criteria instead of using election systems based on job position or title. As Baker et al. explain, skills and attributes illustrate expertise and not the position an individual hold (2006). To supplement methodological consistency, this research defined the term experts with the following criteria: (1) individuals must possess broad knowledge of diversity and inclusion from standard trainings, (2) at the least held a year in a supervisory role, and (3) displays a base knowledge competency from experience.

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After providing the participants' criteria of selection to the research sponsor, a list of 52 professionals from the DoD and outside offices endorsing diversity and inclusion were made available. Because of the participants' descriptions of their office responsibilities, the seat time in leadership and management roles for 1-10 years, and the office activity for D&I, this research deemed all 52 to qualify as experts. According to Loo (2002), scholars suggested the number of participants between five to thirty would suffice and would account for the decrease in attrition rate from round to round. Therefore, in hope to retain at least ten on the final round, an initial e-mail was sent to introduce the study to all the panelists. The disclosed demographic information in **Table 1** reflects the 25 panelists who responded. Additional screening on the first questionnaires was explored to ensure the responses reflect the appropriate level of proficiency. This research withheld any compensations for participating in the questionnaires. Figures 2, 3, 4, and 5 illustrate the graph representations of individual demographic attributes.

Table 1. Participants demographics

Age	Gender		Racial Background					Education Level					Job level			Disability		Religious Preference	
	F	M	White	Black	His	Asian	Multiracial	HS	TS	AD	BD	PD	Line	Sup/Mgmt	Snr lead	Yes	No	Yes	No
18 -24																			
25 - 34	2				1		1					2	1	1			2		2
35 - 44	4	2	6					1			1	4	4	2			6	2	4
45 - 54	4	4	6	3				2			1	5	5	2	1		8	3	5
55+	3	6	5	4								9	1	4	4	1	8	6	3
Totals	13	12	17	7	1	0	1	3	0	0	2	20	11	9	5	1	24	11	14
N =	25																		
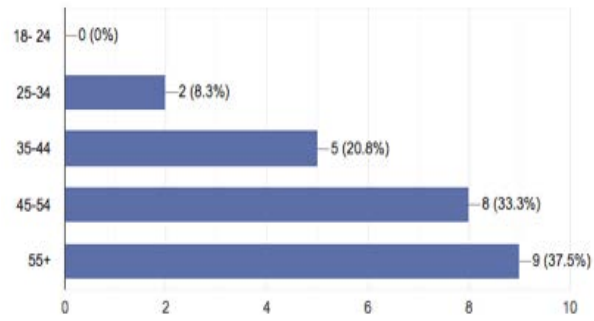
Figure 2. Age
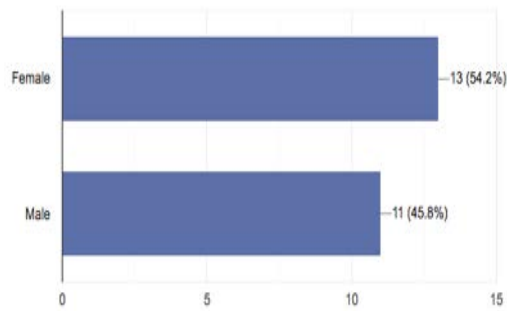
Figure 3. Gender
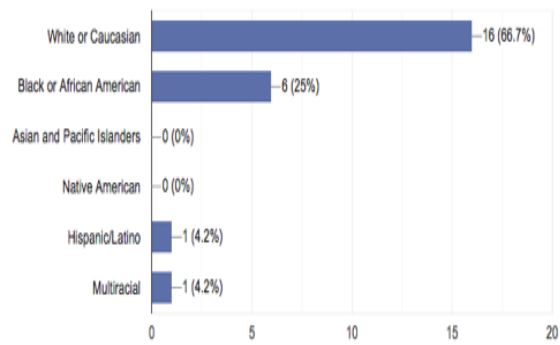
Figure 4. Race identity
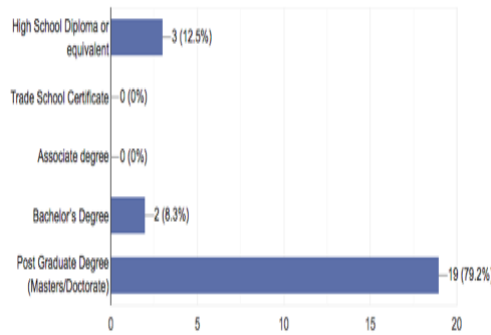
Figure 5. Education level

Delphi: First Round

After the introductory e-mail to the participants, the research followed by distributing the questionnaires enclosing the context to clarify the purpose and help minimize attrition all through the rounds. Each round reached the participants through e-mails with the web page link containing the submission due date, and each session remained available for one week followed by four to seven days of data cleaning and analysis. The web page also restated to the panelist the explicit purpose of the research, methodology, consent, and the goals of conducting this study.

Based on reviewing articles, the researcher identified six indicators of an inclusive environment that address an existing gap in the literature about methods in measuring inclusion. Recognizing gaps in the literature augments the motivation to develop questions (Skulmoski et al., 2007). In the first-round questionnaire, each indicator was introduced for the panelist to scrutinize its validity, improve the descriptions, add more indicators, criticize subjective signs, and determine the level of importance or insignificance for each indicator to qualify as a sign of an inclusive environment. The intention behind round one was to develop the working list of indicators and pursue reliability of the indicators and ultimately for the panelist to filter the list that will

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subsequently be ranked in the following rounds. Revisiting the notion of the Delphi's flexible feature, the first round incorporated an open-ended question in order for the experts to exert their thoughts in expanding key traits of inclusiveness.

The first round consisted of this opening scenario: "Based on our definition of inclusion and an intensive literature review, we found the following indicators of organizations with an inclusive environment: (1) New Ideas are Welcome, (2) Feedback System for the new idea, (3) Conflict Resolution Plan, (4) Groupthink Assessment, (5) High Recruitment & Retention Rate, and (6) Fellowship."

The following questions accompanied the opening scenario in the first round:

1. Considering the above definition of inclusion, please rate how well the following ideas indicate an inclusive organizational environment. Please rate each idea on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 being *not important at all*, 4 being *moderately important*, and 7 being *most important*. Remember, this is not a rating of YOUR unit, but instead a rating of whether or not the given idea is something that might be important to having an inclusive environment.

2. Are there any other indicators (traits, policies, programs, etc.) that you feel would be important for having an inclusive environment? Please list as many as you can think of and provide a brief definition or explanation of your idea.

Curiously, the first round gathered 48% response rate and met the Delphi's suggested number of panelists, 25 experts submitted inputs vital to the data's reliability. However, not surprisingly, as other researchers commented regarding the attrition rate,

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the second round decreased to 34% response rate (18 responses) and 28% response rate (15 responses) in the third round (see **Table 2**). Although, each round met and collected the fair number of responses to determine the methodology's validity and reliability. It was recommended based on other published research to consist of 10-100 responses (DeVet, 2005). A 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 as "not important" and seven as "most important" aided in legitimizing the six emerging indicators as valid variables of inclusiveness based on the responses.

Table 2. Response rate by round

Inivited	Round one respondents	Round one rate	Round two respondents	Round two rate	Round third respondents	Round third rate
52	25	48%	18	34%	15	28%

Second Round

The second round intends to give the participants an opportunity to refine the integrated term descriptions and the combined emerging list from the first round. Participants in this phase were asked to dispute any indicators if needed and then place the indicators in rank order from 1 to 11, rank #1 meaning the most wanted indicator and rank #11 as the least wanted inclusive practice. The only comment received from this round was seeking clarification, requesting to verify if the stratification type focuses on importance or the degree of visibility in an inclusive environment. This phase implemented the weighted average technique in determining its ranking order. Inspired by the Friedman M statistic and non-parametric test, this study chose to employ a widely-accepted, widely-used, and simple quantitative rank order analysis. The weighted average

analysis remains frequently applied in assigning grades to students: homework, projects, and exams often carry different weights; therefore, each category needs to have an assigned weight to efficiently determine a student's rank (Rodriguez, 2017). In 2009, the Department for Communities and Local Government in London, UK also engaged the weighted average approach to supplement their Multi-Criteria Analysis (MCA) model and aid the decision making in their cost and benefits processes. **Figure 6** shows the weighted average ranking formula.

Weighted average ranking formula
w = weight of ranked position
x = total responses

$$\frac{x_1 w_1 + x_2 w_2 + x_3 w_3 \ldots x_n w_n}{\text{Total response count}}$$

Figure 6. Weighted Average Formula

After five days of revisiting and sanitizing the outcomes from the first round, this second web-page was sent to the participants and received a window of 7 days to complete. The second round also opened with the definition of inclusion to assist the participants in refreshing their memory about the purpose of the research and the questionnaire's context.

Third Round

In the third round, this study anticipated the participants to have familiarity retained from the previous two rounds of Delphi on the purpose, definitions, and the whole context of determining the indicators of an inclusive environment. The compilation of the uncovered results from the earlier rounds was presented to the panelists. With an

emphasis on the rank order outcomes, the purpose of the third round is to gather an acceptable consensus on the indicators rank order and decide if this activity will suffice as the final round. The same procedures followed the distribution process of the questionnaire, web-based format, given seven days to answer the questions, and welcome any inquiry for clarification if needed. There was a 5-day period between the end of the second round to the start of the third round. At the end of this round, as indicated in **Table 2**, 15 experts responded. The weighted average technique was again used in this round to rank-order the 11 indicators of an inclusive environment. This time, the utilization of the coefficient of concordance--widely known as Kendall W--assisted in capturing the consensus of the third-round ranking results from the responses.

The technique was a vital aspect of providing an empirical justification to support the Delphi method because Kendall W could statistically assess the trend of agreement among the experts. Maurice G. Kendall and Bernard Smith brought to the statistical world a method (Kendall W) to measure the agreement (m) among semi-quantitative and quantitative variables that evaluate a set (n) of different situations (Kendall & Smith, 1939). The formula shown in **Figure 7** (refer to Kendall and Smith (1939) for the full development and calculation sequence of the Kendall W). To describe the terms, the coefficient of concordance, or the Kendall W, examines the arrangement between raters by a score ranging from 0 to 1, with zero meaning no agreement or every participant ranked the given variable differently, and one for the perfect agreement on the ranking of variables between the experts. According to the statistical tests, results higher than .51 of W reaches a good agreement and a p-value indicating values less than .05 indicate the significance of the W value (Legendre, 2010).

Kendall W formula including the differentiator for tied ranks (Refer to Legendre (2010) for coefficient of concordance calculations):

Figure 7. Kendall W Formula

$$W = \frac{12S' - 3m^2 n(n+1)^2}{m^2(n^3 - n) - mT},$$

$$S = \sum_{i=1}^{n}(R_i - \overline{R})^2 \text{ or } S' = \sum_{i=1}^{n} R_i^2 = SSR, \quad (1) \quad T = \sum_{k=1}^{g}(t_k^3 - t_k),$$

Although, scientific partitioning of the Kendall W may vary from topic to topic. A single standard scoring system may not apply to every domain or topic because of the different levels of severity. For example, ranking automobiles based on drive comfortability versus ranking life changing scientific breakthroughs could pose significant difference of effort to rate, therefore range interpretation of Kendall W would be domain specific. However, Landis and Koch (1977) proposed a measure of agreement displayed in **Table 3** and Schmidt (1997) published a moderate consensus of measurement ranking 11 human resource issues in **Table 4**. Through cross-referencing both interpretations, this research determined a score (*W*) higher than .51 could claim an acceptable consensus.

Table 3. Landis and Koch

Measures of Agreement
Poor Agreement = < 0.20
Fair Agreement = 0.21 to 0.40
Moderate Agreement = 0.42 to 0.60
Good Agreement = 0.61 to 0.80
Excellent Agreement = 0.81 to 1.00

Table 4. Roy Schmidt

Measures of Agreement		Confidence in Ranks
Very weak agreement	.1	None
Weak agreement	.3	Low
Moderate agreement	.5	Fair
Strong agreement	.7	High
Unusually strong agreement	.9	Very high

Summary

Chapter III began by discussing the particular design of the research method implemented in this study: qualitative research through the Delphi methodology. This chapter also explained the researcher's role to interpret the findings based on the guidelines of qualitative design. To organically gather data while avoiding biases, a complete emphasis on exploratory approach from reviewing the literature combined with an inductive manner from the experts underlines the traits of qualitative reasoning. By the Delphi method, this research gained a comprehensive understanding of the intricate and highly subjective phenomena and the member-leader dynamics affecting an organization's inclusiveness. The collected data will uncover keys that will address the

research and investigative questions classified in the first chapter and then refine the

emerging model of inclusion. The following Chapter IV presents an in-depth analysis of

the data.

IV. Analysis and Results

Chapter Overview

This section discusses the analysis of gathered information from literature and the Delphi outcomes that helped develop an inclusion model by examining the emerging themes reflecting an inclusive environment. The addition of five indicators to the initial six indicators uncovered at the beginning of the study and the integration process to list all themes by a level of importance will be laid out in this chapter. Additionally, the data collection process overview provided descriptions of the significant findings. Finally, this chapter will present a base conceptual model in measuring inclusion capable of leveraging its effects on unit performance to further address the investigative question.

Analysis

The launch of Chapter III mentioned the process of acquiring the initial indicators of an inclusive environment. Upon determining the emerging themes, six indicators appeared to start the preliminary phase of the inclusion model. Indicators such as; openness to new ideas, feedback system to communicate new ideas and alternative approaches, conflict resolution plan, groupthink assessment, recruitment & retention rates, and fellowship each validated by the experts. The first round introduced the generated information to the panelist, and as explained in Chapter III, six themes moved past in the first information analysis phase (see **Figure 1**).

Initial Indicators

Initially, eight indicators of an inclusive environment emerged from the reviewed literature; such as New Ideas are Welcome, Feedback System, Conflict Resolution Plan, Groupthink Assessment, High Recruitment and Steady Retention Rate, Fellowship,

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Openness, and Good Communication. Out of the eight indicators, two signs similarly fit the meaning of a single indicator. New ideas and Openness were fused into a single theme since both indicators emphasize inclusiveness through a unit's welcoming nature to new ideas or changes. Then 'Good Communication' arrangement falls under the Feedback System; five sources underlined the importance of feedback as an established workplace communication form. Cross-referencing the meaning of each indicator led the preliminary indicators from eight to six.

The research opened the initial web-based questionnaire for the participants to complete in seven days. Fifty-two e-mail invitations were sent and hoped to receive at the minimum of ten responses, and twenty-five experts contributed their knowledge and experience. The first round resulted in a consistent accepted level of importance for each of the six emerging themes. According to the results of the employed 7-point Likert-type scale, the experts verified the themes as indicators of an inclusive environment. This research decided that the percentage sum of votes from Likert point numbers 4 to 7 as a reasonable score indication to keep a theme. The indicator 'New Ideas are Welcome' resulted in a 95% score equaling 22 of 25 panelists voted for 4 or higher on the scale; Feedback System received a 78%, 83.3% for the 'Conflict Resolution' Plan, 87.6% on 'Groupthink Assessment', 'High Recruitment' and 'Steady Retention Rate' also acquired an 87.6%, and 'Fellowship' obtained a 91.7%. According to a Delphi study conducted by Schmidt (1997), factors voted by over 50% of the panelists insist variable retention in a study. Okoli et al. (2004) also adopted the selection narrowing method. See **Table 5**.

Table 5. Percentage of voted on indicators receiving 4 or higher scale

	Collected a 4 or higher likert score	
New ideas are welcome	22 of 25	95.70%
Feedback system	19 of 25	78.20%
Conflict resolution plan	20 of 25	83.30%
Groupthink assessment	21 of 25	87.60%
Recruitment and retention rate	21 of 25	87.60%
Fellowship	22 of 25	91.70%

The participants endorsed all of the six suggested indicators of an inclusive environment by agreeing or not refuting the framework of each suggested indicator. Only one response attempted to clarify an indicator with a better description: the term 'groupthink' as "an inability for a group to recognize alternatives." The initial description was reconsidered and incorporated the suggested modification. For this reason, the inquiry for rationality on the initial six indicators persisted. Concluding the first round, after the 25 responses evaluated the importance or insignificance of the six indicators initially identified from the literature review, new emerging themes were revealed.

The bulk of the responses offered additional indicators of an inclusive environment, such as (7) Leadership Engagement and Accountability: leaders are engaged at all levels of the organization and abide by the same standards as other members. Leader-member exchanges include mentorship and group activity involvement. (8) Sharing Power: managers motivate power equality, deemphasizing their positional power as a way to encourage collective participation in agenda-setting and decision-making. (9) Inclusive Language: members communicate clearly without using phrases or expressions that may exclude particular groups or create an atmosphere of an "us" versus "them." (10) Well-defined Policies and Policy Enforcement: organizations maintain and

properly execute Equal Opportunity, Non-Attribution, and related policies. Lastly, (11) Culture of Trust: leaders foster members' confidence in the workplace when they are competent, protect their personnel's interests, follow their words with appropriate action, and develop/promote capable employees (see **Table 6**).

The remaining responses described proper organizational management techniques: leadership training, off-duty activities, promotion eligibilities, and management accountability. While all these practices in theory help illustrate inclusion, this research finds the comments leaning more on good management. Therefore, the first round established only the 11 indicators to remain particular in the context of inclusiveness.

Table 6. First round results: 11 indicators of an inclusive environment

Indicators of an Inclusive Environment
1. New ideas are welcome
2. Feedback system
3. Conflict resolution plan
4. Groupthink assessment
5. High Recruitment and steady retention rate
6. Fellowship
7. Leadership engagement and accountability
8. Sharing power
9. Inclusive language
10. Well-defined policies and policy enforcement
11. Culture of trust

Validated Indicators of an Inclusive Environment

In the second round, the focus was to start building consensus on rank-order of the final list. The questionnaire exposed the compiled indicators to the panelist for the first time, and the descriptions for each indicator mentioned earlier were shared on the panelist to explain the context of the added themes better. This round's results showed no responses, in particular, suggesting any addition or changes in the explanations. Each provided context assumed legitimacy throughout the Delphi rounds. The weighted average technique mentioned in Chapter III resulted in the first ranked order of the 11 indicators (see **Figure 6** and **Table 7**).

Tier grouping was also developed to demonstrate additional level of significance classification (see **Table 8**). Tier 1 as highly desired inclusive practices, Tier 2 for moderately desired, and somewhat desired for Tier 3. Interesting differences worth noting between the original list and second round results were the indicators that held their spot. Uniquely, the 'New Ideas are Welcome' stayed as the front runner, valuing the most visible sign and perhaps an extremely needed inclusive practice. The 'Feedback System deviated two positions down acquiring the fourth position; however, it stayed in the Tier 1 group belonging with the four most desired indicators of inclusion. 'Groupthink Assessment' remained in the 5th spot, while the remaining indicators deviated up or down from two to four ranks (see **Figure 8**).

Inclusive environment indicators ranking

- 1.New Ideas are Welcome
- 11.Culture of Trust
- 7.Leadership Engagement and Accountability
- 2.New Ideas Feedback System
- 5.Avoiding Groupthink
- 9.Inclusive Language
- 6.High Recruitment and Retention rate
- 3.Conflict Resolution Plan
- 10.Well-defined Policies and Policy enforcement
- 4.Fellowship
- 8.Sharing power
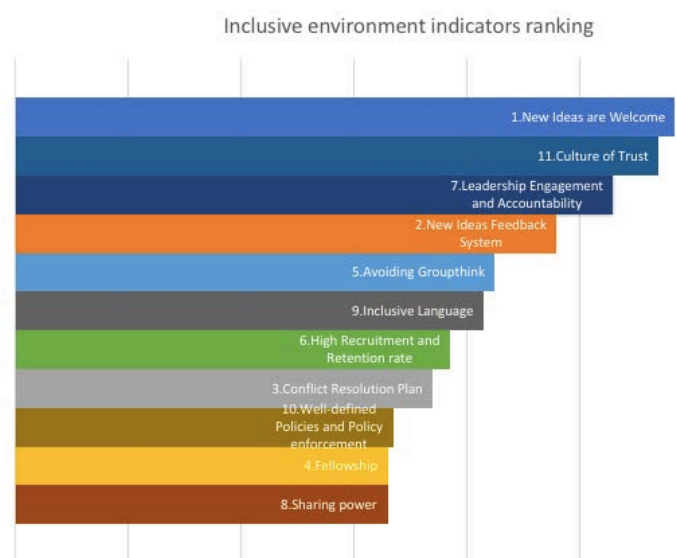
Figure 8. Second round ranking order

Table 7. Second round ranking order

Second round rank-order
1. New ideas are welcome
2. Culture of trust
3. Leadership engagement and accountability
4. Feedback system
5. Groupthink assessment
6. Inclusive language
7. High Recruitment and steady retention rate
8. Conflict resolution plan
9. Well-defined policies and policy enforcement
10. Fellowship
11. Sharing power

Table 8. Tier grouping

Rank 1 to 4	Tier 1
Rank 5 to 8	Tier 2
Rank 9 to 11	Tier 3

Final Round: Consensus

The panel members in the third round should have familiarity with the study procedures and construct used in identifying key indicators practiced in an inclusive environment. Only two questions were asked for this round; panelists were once again requested to rank the results from the second round of the 11 indicators and provide final comments on practices making inclusion successful in an organization. The principles defining an indication of inclusiveness should render reasonable understanding within the participants. At the end of round three, this phase anticipated the goal of the panelist attaining a consensus and finalizing the indicators rank-order as well as concluding the Delphi activity. Through email, the panelists received the web-based link for the questionnaire and were asked to submit the responses in seven days.

As indicated in **Table 2**, 15 experts replied ranking the indicators listed from the previous round. Upon retrieval of the results, the weighted average computation was implemented similarly from round two, and the results signified the final compilation (see **Figure 9** and **Table 9**). In this round, key indicators consistently holding positions delivered significant signs of consensus; the experts' agreement or the absence of challenges to Tier 1 indicators positioning provided the third round a cue to advance into a greater statistical technique.

Figure 9. Third round rank-order (graph illustration)

Table 9. Third round rank-order

The Tier 1 that contains with the most desired indicators remaining parallel from the round two results suggested strong consensus (see **Table 10**). With no changes, this

grouping established the base of key inclusive indicators of a future model able to successfully leverage inclusion. The result implies that (1st) New Ideas are Welcome, (2nd) Culture of Trust, (3rd) Leadership Engagement, and (4th) Feedback System should associate with heavier weight score values in the model measuring a unit's inclusion.

Table 10. Tier 1

Commonality	Rank
New Ideas are welcome	1
Culture of trust	2
Leadership Engagement	3
New ideas feedback sys	4

Tier 2 displayed a good consensus closely emulating Tier 1 results with just minor positional changes. **Table 11** shows the difference between the indicators' rank-order. From round two, 'Inclusive Language' occupied rank # 6 and 'Groupthink Assessment' on # 5, switching positions at the end of round three. 'Conflict Resolution Plan' settled on the 8th rank while 'well-defined policies and policy procedures' climbed to # 7 from # 9 asserting itself into Tier 1. With minimal adjustment of the indicators, strong consensus resonated from this tier.

Tier 2 round comparisons

Table 11. Tier 2 round comparisons

3rd round	Rank	Comparison	2nd round	Rank
Inclusive language	5		Inclusive language	6
Avoiding groupthink	6		Avoiding groupthink	5
Well defined policies	7		Well defined	9
Conflict resolutions	8		Conflict resolutions	8

Round three Tier 3 resulted in an acceptable consensus (see **Table 12**), the

remaining indicators 'High Recruitment and Steady Retention Rate', 'Sharing Power,'

and 'Fellowship' each only deviated up or down two rank positions. A conservative

movement of the indicators belonging in this tier demonstrates satisfactory agreement

from the experts. As based on the general unanimity, the majority of the panelists kept

these three indicators at the bottom.

Table 12. Tier 3 round comparisons

3rd round	Rank	Comparison	2nd round	Rank
High recruitment	9		High recruitment	7
Sharing power	10		Sharing power	11
Fellowship	11		Fellowship	10

Statistical calculations of the min, max, median, mean, and standard deviation were also provided to add quantitative support in determining the result as a valid candidate to close the Delphi rounds (see **Table 13**). Notice that the standard deviations of 'New Ideas are Welcome' (0.79), 'Feedback System' (2.59), and 'Conflict Resolution' (1.89), remained nominal on moving, and thus reflected the overall cross-analysis of the results from all three rounds.

Table 13. Statistical analysis

	Min	Max	Median	Mean	Stand Dev
STATISTICS					
New Ideas are Welcome	1	3	2	2.09	0.79
Culture of Trust	1	9	2	3	2.68
Leadership Engagement and Accountability New Ideas	1	10	3	3.92	2.4
Feedback System	1	9	4	5.25	2.59
Inclusive Language	2	10	6	6.09	2.31
Sharing power	2	11	9.5	8.08	3.12
Well-defined Policies and Policy	3	11	7	6.92	2.33
Conflict Resolution Plan	4	10	8	7.58	1.89
Avoiding Groupthink	5	11	6	6.9	2.3
High Recruitment and Retention	5	11	8	8	1.91
Fellowship	5	11	10	9.36	1.82

As indicated in **Table 14**, the Kendall *W* calculation resulted in a score of .689, achieving a fair agreement according to Schmidt's (1997) proposed range of agreements. Referring to the method's testing of significance, the p-value of 1.106 with -17

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exponential placement proved the score to be of significant value. However, this research claims a high agreement from cross-referencing the range of agreements illustrated in **Table 3** and **Table 4**. In the third round, this research attained an acceptably strong consensus from the experts.

Table 14. Kendal *W* results

Kendall Ws											
Response	New Ideas are welcome	Culture of trust	Leadership Engagement	New ideas feedback	Avoiding groupthink	Inclusive language	Recruitment & retention	Conflict resolution	Well-defined Policies and Policy enforcement	Fellowship	Sharing power
1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
2	3	1	4	8	6	10	7	9	5	11	2
3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
4	1	9	7	8	10	2	11	4	3	5	6
5	2	1	3	9	10	8	5	7	6	11	4
6	3	2	10	1	6	9	11	8	5	7	4
7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
8	2	1	3	4	6	7	8	9	5	10	11
9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
10	2	1	3	6	11	4	5	9	7	10	8
11	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	10	11	8	9
12	3	2	1	4	5	6	9	8	7	11	10
13	3	2	1	4	5	6	8	9	7	10	11
14	1	5	4	2	3	7	8	6	9	11	10
15	2	8	5	9	1	3	6	4	7	10	11
	27	42	56	75	88	92	113	115	108	144	130

k	11
m	15
W	0.68969697
r	0.66753247
X^2	103.454545
df	10
p-value	1.1067E-17

To keep the robustness of this study, it is imperative that this research considers the experts' final comments to the overall activity. Out of the 15, four experts offered their final comments regarding their opinion on diversity and inclusion within their organization or observations from other units. The first comment stated "it seems that inclusion is only for a chosen few, it is and I hate to quote (good ole boy system) but it is real and it is evident in promotions and hiring." This statement may suggest that to be

included and recognized by a group, there is a perception to stand out from peers first. Several articles support the issue of needing to break barriers in specific industries or accept unsolicited special favors to achieve inclusion instead of opening a path to success in the beginning. Oyler et al. (2011) supported the difficulty notion of rising through the ranks in a company without adhering to special favors from upper management.

The second response commented on the significance of the Policies and Policy enforcement indicator, "having well defined and communicated policies shows that inclusion is important, other listed items support through action." Policies and procedures help ensure an organization runs smoothly (Waterhouse & Rogers, 2004). A comment specifically towards the 11th ranked 'Fellowship' indicator wondered the possible reason it received the lowest rank: "I do wonder if #11 needs to be interpreted within the inherent hierarchical command structure of the military, which to a great degree cannot be flattened, particularly in high threat/operational settings; however, that's probably why it is the lowest ranked." This research reflected on the rigidity of a typical military command structure; to a point, the structure heavily influences the level of fellowship's importance in a unit. However, camaraderie can be argued as a vital dynamic in the military.

The last comment advised for a more precise definition of the percentage aspect of the retention rate: "a Steady Retention Rate is not defined. If it's steady as 50%, that may be a bad thing. If you mean appropriate retention rate, current rank is good." In consideration, this research rationalizes steady retention rate as an organization's ability to retain members for however long a specific company assigned as the average longevity of employment. Overall, the third Delphi concluded as the final round.

Table 15. Overview of data collection and the Inclusion Model
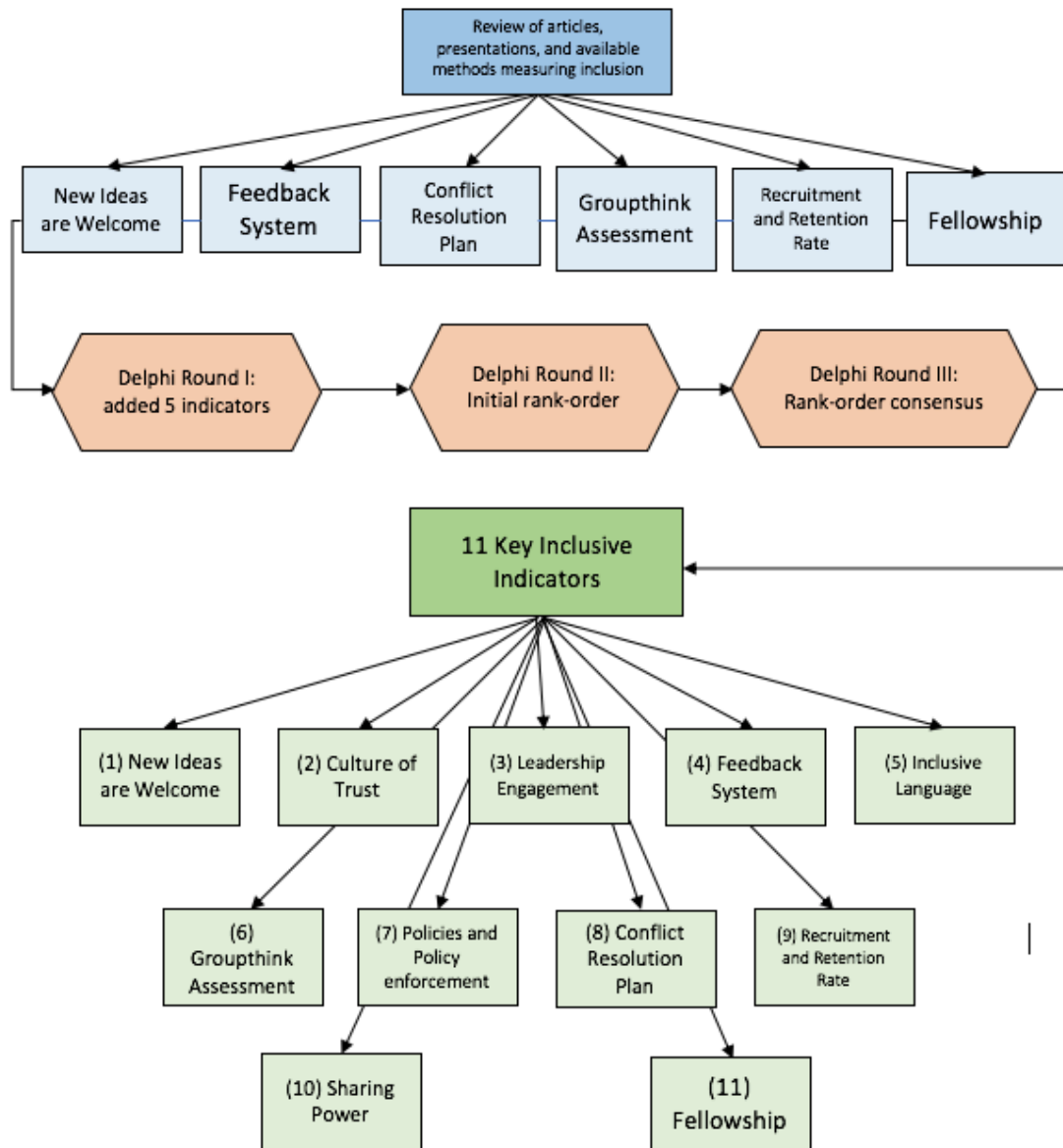
V. Discussion, Implications, and Conclusion

Chapter Overview

This chapter will further discuss the findings from Chapter IV and explain the potential implications of measuring inclusion based on the model of critical indicators identified in the study. In the discussion, the challenges in identifying the indicators capable of evaluating an organization's inclusivity will be explored to provide the objectivity of expending a group-based approach in developing an inclusion model. Next, implications in measuring inclusion will reveal potential D&I status that indeed seizes the inclusive climate of a unit and use the reports to leverage diversity and inclusion in influencing unit performance. Finally, Chapter V will conclude with recommendations in utilizing the key inclusive indicators and for future research.

Discussion

The purpose of this research was to develop a method of effectively measuring inclusion and produce reports capable of encompassing the essence of diversity and inclusion. Leaders could receive a base metric of inclusion that could rationally overlap with factors affecting unit performance. Upon usage of the qualitative research method, reviewing literature uncovered the scarcity of articles on methods to measure inclusion. This gap in literature stressed the process in identifying the indicators laid in the previous chapters. It also supports the perspective on information scarcity because of private consulting firms' reservation to keep the rights on D&I evaluation strictly for companies that acquired consultation. In addition, this research lacked the opportunity to seek the model those companies commissioned.

From reviewing the website of Gallup Inc and the Inclusion Index framework overview, both firms developed their methods through the lens of individual needs pursuing effective equal opportunity practices. The main issue from developing a similar approach is the focus on organizational behavior attempting to fulfill individual entitlements, and this compromises the real goal of measuring inclusion: leveraging diversity to influence "unit" performance. Therefore, upon a rigorous review of the available literature, this research emphasized a holistic approach to discover the essence of an inclusive environment from a unit's perspective. Complemented by the Delphi procedure, this research garnered the wisdom and experience of 25 experts and generated 11 ranked indicators of an inclusive environment.

The challenge emerging from the inclusion model lies in associating factors improving a unit performance, especially with specific indicators not measurable by traditional metric values such as time, productivity, and cost. The indicator 'New Ideas are Welcome' could be measured through the frequency of innovative thoughts and alternative approaches matched with the organization's growth. According to the book Innovation and Growth in the Global Economy, high growth rates correlate with multiple variables tied to political and economic progression. Countries with renowned first world economies tend to also enjoy technological innovations (Grossman & Helpman, 1993). Perhaps, the 'New Ideas are Welcome' indicator could associate with performance factors through economic effects.

A similar case applies to 'Leadership Engagement, Feedback System, Conflict Resolution Plan, Policies & Policy Enforcement, and Hight Recruitment & Steady Retention Rates.' Numerous articles describe overlapping concepts of these indicators

with factors evaluated by managers and leaders to improve processes, organizational communication strategies, and increase productivity. Looking at these signs through economic terms and observing correlations between variables will lead to outcomes able to close the gap on inclusion measurements and performance metrics. On the opposite spectrum, the difficulty in bridging inclusive indicators and performance factors stems from the abstract concepts without an organic means of measurement. The indicators 'Culture of Trust, Inclusive Language, Groupthink Assessment, Sharing Power, and Fellowship' are all individual phenomena that will be challenging to justify in economic terms empirically.

Implications

Besides the ultimate goal of leveraging inclusion, a method measuring an organization's inclusion that captures accurate measurements of diversity beyond demographical representations could deliver various effects in determining the effectiveness and efficiency of implemented D&I program. In the USAF, or perhaps the entire DoD, a negative perception floats over diversity and inclusion according to unofficial comments expressed by multiple personnel in the military from both active duty and civilian. To a point that negative opinions on D&I slightly implies its credibility. The confusion as to what actually diversity and inclusion programs produce and how it translates to unit experiences evoke mixed thoughts about its relevance. For an anonymous example, when asked about what D&I program contribute to the military mission, the often response attributes to the benefits of being diverse and the obligation to fulfill policies in Equal Opportunity. This research seldom obtained thoughts and practical information that offers reputable value in cultivating D&I programs. Therefore,

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program's effectiveness and efficiency remain in questioned by both members and leadership in the military.

An inclusion model certainly supplies tangible results illuminating the essence of inclusive practices in an organization while underlining the drivers that justify D&I programs across the USAF. The combined indicators uncovered in this research produced the inclusion model capable of evaluating an organization's inclusiveness. As a suggested form of application (see **Table 16**), management could adopt the ranked and verified 11 indicators of inclusion and create a framework with each indicator evaluated based on a 7-point Likert-type scale applied similarly in Chapter III. The weighted average technique would supplement the score calculations and provide the empirical results necessary to determine levels of significance. Individual indicator scores would reveal weaknesses in certain management aspects; upon acknowledgment, managers and leaders could integrate the scores in the decision-making process regarding the improvement of these areas. As for what constitutes an acceptable score, this research suggests adopting the range proposed by Schmidt (1997) in **Table 4**, replacing the term 'agreement' with 'evident.' In essence, the inclusion model stands as an additional management tool. Then a unit's score pooled with the scores from organizations in the USAF will serve as the general data that honestly reports the status of diversity and inclusion. This empirical result supports the objective of encouraging organizational habits and enriches a favorable climate within the workplace.

Conclusions

In respect to the vibrant literature expanding on the beneficial factors of embodying a diverse environment and the in-depth analysis employed on three different

rounds, 11 indicators validated by experts comprise the capability to measure inclusion. While each indicator could separately construct specific outcomes of organizational behavior, the research goal was not to necessarily raise each distinctive proficiency and understand the mechanism driving its occurrence. Instead, due to the critical aspect of qualitative research, the goal was to identify these indicators from an overview perspective and systematically analyze the emerging themes that enlighten the capacity to measure phenomena. Following the logic and replication of the research design, 11 key indicators emerged exhibiting various traits describing the nature of inclusiveness and hinted conceivable approaches to manufacture substantial information. This data may lead to leveraging inclusion and could influence unit performance by integrating effective inclusive practices in management decision-making.

The entirety of the research question inquired how the USAF can measure a unit to determine its inclusiveness and capitalize on the results to influence unit performance. To address the research question, intensive review in the literature was conducted to refine the meaning of inclusion and first established a construct describing an inclusive environment. The IQ focused on the indicators apparent in an inclusive organization, 11 indicators surfaced, were examined, and then developed into a model. In addition, the investigative question considered factors in an organization that overlaps with inclusive practices influencing both individual and team performance. Then the research responded by suggesting an example of application strategy in evaluating a unit.

Despite the limitations and assumptions of engaging the Delphi method in this qualitative research, the findings offer a foundation recommending actions and future research. The model proposed in this research can initially be adopted as it stands. Even

though some indicators may not apply to an organization, specific themes could address areas of management needing adjustment to promote healthy member-to-member and member-to-employer interactions. Other quantitative reasoning integrated with the indicators could upgrade the model and perhaps generate better data explaining the overall status of diversity and inclusion in the entire DoD. If fully adopted by the military and used in time, a refined model with historical outcomes could also qualify for a license to distribute and claim as a social innovation pioneered by the USAF.

In relation to future research, this study validated the identified features of inclusion that will provide value to diversity and inclusion programs and in the military. Measuring inclusion can go beyond reports about diversity and mere compliance on equal opportunity policies imposed by law; it could transform social aspects within the professional environment to worthy information that enhances productivity, innovation, and overall process efficiency. Further examination of the indicators with intersecting concepts of factors affecting individual and group performance could expand the results and leverage inclusion. Therefore, this research recommends more efforts in extending the study to congeal the relationship of inclusion and performance.

Final Thoughts

As diversity in the DoD continues to grow, and along with it the shift on interpersonal dynamics, social innovation in management posits the relevance of generating definite information describing the actual climate of an organization. Even with the active display of appropriate personal interactions, rules compliance, and task completions, the actual value of diversity and inclusion and its sustainment in the military could only be justified through measurable reports. Lastly, mutual understandings in

assimilating social habits toward improvement between personnel could promote a better

sense of unity, not just in performing unit tasks but in society as a whole.

Table 16. An application example of the Inclusion Model

Unit Inclusiveness Evaluation

Name of Unit Being Evaluated:

Directions

Please rate each item on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 being *not evident at all*, 4 being *moderately evident*, and 7 being *most evident*. Remember, this is a rating of your unit based on your own perceptions of the following characteristics. Please answer honestly, as there are no right or wrong answers. The results will be aggregated and presented in a way that you and your personal responses will be kept confidential.

1) New Ideas are Welcome   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Definition:

There is a high tolerance and even encouragement for new ideas to be shared.

2) Culture of Trust   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Definition:

Leaders foster members' confidence in the workplace when they are competent, protect their personnel's interests, follow their words with appropriate action, and develop/promote capable employees.

3) Leadership Engagement and Accountability   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Definition:

Leaders are engaged at all levels of the organization and abide by the same standards as other members. Leader-member exchanges include mentorship and group activity involvement.

4) New Ideas Feedback System   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Definition:

Robust communication lines are in place for new ideas and dissimilar perspectives, to include a swift feedback system on proposed positions/philosophies from both the top-down and laterally in the organizational structure.

5) Inclusive Language   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Definition:

Members communicate clearly without using phrases or expressions that may exclude particular groups or create an atmosphere of an "us" versus "them."

6) Groupthink Assessment   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Definition:

To ensure a well-balanced decision are made, evaluation routines and corrective measures are in place to recognize alternatives.

7) Well-defined Policies and Policy Enforcement   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Definition:

Organizations maintain and properly execute Equal Opportunity, Non-Attribution, and related policies.

8) Conflict Resolution Plan   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Definition:

Reconciliation methods and procedures are in place to diffuse negative tensions from opposing viewpoints/attitudes/differences.

9) High Recruitment and Steady Retention Rate   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Definition:

The unit has a high recruit fulfillment rate and steady employment retention ratio.

10) Sharing Power   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Definition:

Managers motivate power equality, deemphasizing their positional power as a way to encourage collective participation in agenda-setting and decision-making.

11) Culture of Trust   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Definition: Leaders foster members' confidence in the workplace when they are competent, protect their personnel's interests, follow their words with appropriate action, and develop/promote capable employees

Demographics

1. What is your gender identity?

Male   Female

2. What do you consider is your race identity?

White

Black

Asian (includes Pacific Islanders)

Hispanic/Latino

Multiracial

3. What is your age?

18- 24   25-29   30-34   35-39   40-44   45-49   50-54   55+

4. What is your education level?

High School Diploma

Trade School Certificate

Associate degree

Bachelor's Degree

Post Graduate Degree (Masters/Doctorate)

5. What is your current job level and years on position?

Line employee

Manager/supervisor

Senior leader

6. Are you considered disabled? If yes, please name disability.

7. Any Religious preference? If yes, please name.

Appendix A - AFIT Institutional Review Board Exemption Approval

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
AIR FORCE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE OHIO

20 November 2018

MEMORANDUM FOR MAJ BENJAMIN T HAZEN, PHD

FROM: William A. Cunningham, Ph.D.
   AFIT IRB Research Reviewer
   2950 Hobson Way
   Wright-Patterson AFB, OH 45433-7765

SUBJECT: Approval for exemption request from human experimentation requirements (32 CFR 219, DoD 3216.2 and AFI 40-402) for your study on the Qualitative Approach to Measuring Inclusion study, package number REN2019003R Hazen.

1. Your request was based on the Code of Federal Regulations, title 32, part 219, section 101, paragraph (b) (2) Research activities that involve the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior unless: (i) Information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

2. Your study qualifies for this exemption because you are not collecting sensitive data, which could reasonably damage the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation. Further, the demographic data you are utilizing and the way that you plan to report it cannot realistically be expected to map a given response to a specific subject.

3. This determination pertains only to the Federal, Department of Defense, and Air Force regulations that govern the use of human subjects in research. Further, if a subject's future response reasonably places them at risk of criminal or civil liability or is damaging to their financial standing, employability, or reputation, you are required to file an adverse event report with this office immediately.

         WILLIAM A CUNNINGHAM, PH.D.
         AFIT Exempt Determination Official

Appendix B - Delphi Method Protocol

TALKING PAPER

ON

A QUALITATIVE APPROACH TO MEASURING INCLUSION

- The purpose of this talking paper is to introduce a research being conducted by the Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT). This study will help develop a measurement tool on inclusion under the construct of organizational diversity. In addition, the inclusion model will help USAF top leaders leverage inclusion in enhancing unit performances as well effective actions modifying diversity and inclusion programs across the USAF. The researchers expect to uncover the gap on effective tools available for measuring inclusion by collecting and analyzing the responses of an expert panel through a Delphi study approach.

- Research Questions

    -- How can USAF unit leaders measure inclusion to determine the relationship between inclusion, diversity, and performance?
    Sub questions:
            -What factors make up inclusion?
            -What are the most germane measures of performance that can be affected by diversity? By inclusion?
            -How can leaders apply knowledge regarding levels of inclusion in their organization to translate diversity into performance?

- Research Objectives

   -- Develop a measurement model for organization with an inclusive culture and leverage factors of inclusion that enhance unit performance.

- Research Methodology

   -- Delphi Method

- Points of Contact

   -- Researcher, Capt Heston D. Lubiano, Student, AFIT, Dept. of Operational Sciences: hestonjohn.lubiano@afit.edu

   -- Principal Investigator, Maj Benjamin Hazen, Associate Professor, AFIT, Department of Operational Sciences: benjamin.hazen@afit.edu or (937) 255-3636 x4337.

APPENDIX C - CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN DELPHI STUDY

Measuring Inclusion: Inclusive Environment Model

Background

You are receiving this questionnaire based on your knowledge of and experience with the topic of diversity and inclusion. *The purpose of this research is to help the USAF develop a tool to measure inclusive environments in AF units. We expect that the resulting inclusion model will help USAF leaders leverage diversity in a way that enables individual and unit level performance.* By participating, **you** have the unique opportunity to possibly influence future USAF diversity and inclusion management.

The data for this research will come from the responses you and fellow participants provide through a Delphi method. Delphi studies typically consist of 2-4 rounds of questionnaires intended to gather expert viewpoints, in this case via anonymous questionnaire responses. Additional rounds of questionnaires are used to help reach a consensus amongst subject matter experts (SMEs). Through analyzing your aggregated responses, we intend to determine the primary factors that contribute to an inclusive environment in USAF units. There are nine questions for round one and the subsequent rounds will be announced as needed. We anticipate three rounds of this survey, each one taking less time to complete. Each round of surveys takes about one week to complete, and all research should be concluded by the end of 2018. Each questionnaire is anonymous and non-attributional, so please elaborate fully on your answers.

Confidentiality: Questionnaire responses are confidential. Your identity will not be associated with any responses. No individual data will be collected or reported; only data in aggregate will be made public. We understand that data collected must be protected at all times, only be known to the researchers, and managed according to the Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT) Institution Review Board protocol. At the conclusion of the study, all data will be turned over to the study advisor (Dr. Hazen), all other copies will be destroyed. Please email Benjamin.hazen@afit.edu or hestonjohn.lubiano@afit.edu for any concerns.

Voluntary consent: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your participation in completing each questionnaire should take less than 10 minutes per round. You have the right to decline to answer any question or to withdraw at any time. Your decision to participate or decline will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits. Clicking the OK button below and answering the questionnaire confirms your consent to participate in this study.

APPENDIX D - Questionnaires

First Round Questionnaire

We define inclusion as "the process of creating a culture where all members of an organization are free to make their fullest contribution to the success of the group regardless of the members' background, gender, age, ethnicity, and physical capabilities." Based on our definition and an intensive literature review, we found the following indicators of organizations with an inclusive environment: (a) new ideas are welcome, (b) feedback system for the new idea, (c) conflict resolution plan, (d) groupthink prevention, (e) high recruitment & retention rate, and (f) fellowship.

1. Considering the above definition of inclusion, please rate how well the following ideas indicate an inclusive organizational environment. Please rate each idea on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 being *not important at all*, 4 being *moderately important*, and 7 being *most important*. Remember, this is not a rating of YOUR unit, but instead a rating of whether or not the given idea is something that might be important to having an inclusive environment.

   a. New Ideas are Welcome: There is a high tolerance and even encouragement for new ideas to be shared.

      1   2   3   4   5   6   7

   b. New Ideas Feedback System: robust communication lines are in place for new ideas and dissimilar perspectives, to include a swift feedback system on proposed positions/philosophies from both the top-down and laterally in the organizational structure.

      1   2   3   4   5   6   7

   c. Conflict Resolution Plan: reconciliation methods and procedures are in place to diffuse negative tensions from opposing viewpoints/attitudes/differences.

      1   2   3   4   5   6   7

   d. Assessment on Groupthink: To ensure a well-balanced decision, evaluation routines and corrective measures are in place to negate the practice of making decisions as a group that may discourage individual responsibility.

      1   2   3   4   5   6   7

   e. High Recruitment and Retention rate: the unit has a high recruit fulfillment rate and steady employment retention ratio.

      1   2   3   4   5   6   7

f. Fellowship: Aside from salary, benefits, incentives, status, and need of employment, employees commit to a long-term employment commitment because of the sense of belonging to a team.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

2. Are there any other indicators (traits, policies, programs, etc.) that you feel would be important for having an inclusive environment? Please list as many as you can think of, and provide a brief definition or explanation of your idea.

3. What is your gender identity?

Male   Female

4. What do you consider is your race identity?

White
Black
Asian (includes Pacific Islanders)
Hispanic/Latino
Multiracial

5. What is your age?

18- 24   25-29   30-34   35-39   40-44   45-49   50-54   55+

6. What is your education level?

High School Diploma
Trade School Certificate
Associate degree
Bachelor's Degree
Post Graduate Degree (Masters/Doctorate)

7. What is your current job level and years on position?

Line employee
Manager/supervisor
Senior leader

8. Are you considered disabled? If yes, please name disability.

9. Any Religious preference? If yes, please name.

Second Round Questionnaire

Inclusion defined as "the process of creating a culture where all members of an organization are free to make their fullest contribution to the success of the group regardless of the members' background, gender, age, ethnicity, and physical capabilities."

1. Based on the collective results from the first round, below is the rate order from the scale of 1 to 7, with 1 being *not important at all*, 4 being *moderately important*, and 7 being *most important* of the following indicators of an inclusive organizational environment.

   Most Important - New Ideas are Welcome: There is a high tolerance and even encouragement for new ideas to be shared.

   #2 - New Ideas Feedback System: robust communication lines are in place for new ideas and dissimilar perspectives, to include a swift feedback system on proposed positions/philosophies from both the top-down and laterally in the organizational structure.

   #3 - Conflict Resolution Plan: reconciliation methods and procedures are in place to diffuse negative tensions from opposing viewpoints/attitudes/differences.

   #4 - Fellowship: Aside from salary, benefits, incentives, status, and need of employment, employees commit to a long-term employment commitment because of the sense of belonging to a team. In addition, members participate on activities at work not related to their main responsibility.

   #5 - Avoiding Groupthink: To ensure a well-balanced decisions are made, evaluation routines and corrective measures are in place to recognize alternatives.

   Least Important - High Recruitment and Retention rate: the unit has a high recruit fulfillment rate and steady employment retention ratio.

   Please select action below:

   Agree with the order   Reorder: according to your opinion   Remove an indicator

2. According to the proposed additional indicators of an inclusive environment from the first round, please select a response for each indicator.

a. Leadership Engagement and Accountability – highly inclusive units tend to have determined leaders engaged at all levels of the organization and abide to the same rules they promote for members to follow. Leader-member envelopment includes mentorship and group activity involvement.

      Include (please rank with question #1 indicators)   Don't Include

b. Sharing power and decision-making – encouraging workplace consists of leaders who inspire equal parts and build on members' role power instead of their own personal power, therefore encouraging a collective participation in the organization's decision-making process.

      Include (please rank with question #1 indicators)   Don't Include

c. Inclusive Language – awareness to communicate clearly without using phrases or expressions that may exclude particular groups. Example, words such as "guys" or other male pronouns excluding females in the unit.

      Include (please rank with question #1 indicators)   Don't Include

e. Well-defined Policies and Policy enforcement - organizations with Equal Opportunity and Non-Attribution policies, and effective policy enforcement attract inclusivity in the workplace.

      Include (please rank with question #1 indicators)   Don't Include

f. Culture of Trust – members show confidence in the workplace when leaders are competent, protect their personnel's interest, committed to actions/follow through, and develop or promote capable internal employees before reaching outside the organization.

      Include (please rank with question #1 indicators)   Don't Include

Third Round Questionnaire

Inclusion is defined as "the process of creating a culture where all members of an organization are free to make their fullest contribution to the success of the group regardless of the members' background, gender, age, ethnicity, and physical capabilities."

Based on the results from the second round, the rank-order of indicators of an inclusive environment are below, rated from 1 being the most important to 11 as the least important. Considering these results, please rank these indicators one more time if needed. The idea behind this round is to gain consensus on the listing. If you have any rankings that are a major departure from this listing, please provide comments in the space provided to explain why. We value all opinions derived from this esteemed group.

Please rank the following:

1   New Ideas are Welcome: There is a high tolerance and even encouragement for new ideas to be shared.

2   Culture of Trust: leaders foster members' confidence in the workplace when they are competent, protect their personnel's interests, follow their words with appropriate action, and develop/promote capable employees.

3   Leadership Engagement and Accountability: leaders are engaged at all levels of the organization and abide by the same standards as other members. Leader-member exchanges include mentorship and group activity involvement.

4   New Ideas Feedback System: robust communication lines are in place for   new ideas and dissimilar perspectives, to include a swift feedback system on proposed positions/philosophies from both the top-down and laterally in the organizational structure.

5   Avoiding Groupthink: To ensure well-balanced decisions are made, evaluation routines and corrective measures are in place to recognize alternatives.

6   Inclusive Language: members communicate clearly without using phrases or expressions that may exclude particular groups or create an atmosphere of an "us" versus "them."

7   High Recruitment and Retention rate: the unit has a high recruit fulfillment rate and steady employment retention ratio.

8   Conflict Resolution Plan: reconciliation methods and procedures are in place to diffuse negative tensions from opposing viewpoints/attitudes/differences.

9   Well-defined Policies and Policy enforcement: organizations maintain and properly execute Equal Opportunity, Non-Attribution and related policies.

10 Fellowship: Aside from salary, benefits, incentives, status, and need of employment, employees commit to a long-term employment commitment because of the sense of belonging to

a team. In addition, members participate on activities at work not related to their main responsibility.

11 Sharing power: managers motivate power equality, deemphasizing their own positional power as a way to encourage collective participation in agenda-setting and decision-making.

Please provide any additional comments here:

A QUALITATIVE APPROACH TO MEASURE INCLUSION

DEPARTMENT OF OPERATIONAL SCIENCES

AFIT — AIR FORCE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

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Purpose
The purpose of this research is to develop an instrument to measure inclusion.

Research Question (RQ)
How can USAF leaders measure inclusion to determine an organization's inclusive climate?

Introduction
The Department of Defense's Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan affirms the importance of an enriched inclusive workplace to attract and retain top performers and improve the military's effectiveness. The United States Air Force under the guidance of DoD looks to maintain and foster an inclusive culture to continue enhancing its ability to perform its missions. Through inclusion, it will provide the organization with a variety of new and enhanced skills, and other abilities that an organization would otherwise not realize. Therefore, it is vital for our leaders to possess a method capable of measuring inclusion and adequately leverage diversity in enhancing our military's effectiveness and performance.

Problem Statement
Because of the USAF's forward-looking stance toward cultivating diversity and leveraging the benefits of inclusivity to improve performance, leaders require a tangible tool to effectively measure inclusion.

Methodology
- Various articles, peer-reviewed journals, and diversity reports were initially gathered to identify inclusive indicators
- Employment of Delphi method, 3 rounds of questionnaires
- 25 experts participated in the Delphi
- Delphi method gathered and validated 11 indicators of an inclusive environment.
- Kendall W, weighted average, and basic statistical techniques analyzed the gathered data

Limitations
- The focus on opinions of experts as military members and other stakeholders in the military environment automatically undertakes venue control and compromises populous general representation
- Research participants could have contributed replies with presumed bias regarding a specific group

Recommendations
- The model proposed in this research can initially be adopted
- Specific themes could address areas of management needing adjustment to promote inclusion
- Other quantitative reasoning could upgrade the model
- Further examinations of the indicators that intersects with factors affecting individual and group performance could expand ways to leverage inclusion

11 Key Inclusive Indicators:
(1) New Ideas are Welcome
(2) Culture of Trust
(3) Leadership Engagement
(4) Feedback System
(5) Inclusive Language
(6) Groupthink Assessment
(7) Policies and Policy enforcement
(8) Conflict Resolution Plan
(9) Recruitment and Retention Rate
(10) Sharing Power
(11) Fellowship

k	11
m	15
W	0.63956507
x^2	0.68753247
df	103.454545
p-value	1.10678E-17

Significance
- 11 indicators reached consensus to remain in the context of inclusiveness
- Leaders could receive a base metrics of inclusion that could rationally overlaps with factors affecting unit performance
- The goal was to identify these indicators from an overwatch perspective and systematically analyze the emerging themes that enlighten the capacity to measure inclusion

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14. ABSTRACT
    Diversity and inclusion (D&I) programs in the United States Air Force (USAF) continue to face challenges to leveraging practices that can improve unit performance. Despite the known benefits of diversity and inclusion, the USAF as an enterprise has not consistently offered a clear and unbiased assessment of organizational inclusiveness. The purpose of this research was to develop a model to measure the inclusiveness of an organization and leverage its results to help identify areas of weakness and improve performance. The research questions were addressed by reviewing the existing literature and conducting a three-round Delphi study. In total, twenty-five field experts from across the Department of Defense (DoD) participated in the Delphi study.
    The research initially identified eight indicators of an inclusive environment, which was reduced to six after clarifying overlapping terms. These six indicators describe the features apparent in an inclusive environment; experts validated these indicators which constitute the base categories in the initial model. Throughout the first and second Delphi rounds, the experts added five more, totaling eleven indicators that are present in an inclusive environment. The highlight of this research was the development of a model to measure a unit's inclusivity and a framework to address possible areas of management intervention. Ultimately, the researcher provided recommendations for unit leaders across an organization to utilize the developed tool and discussed opportunities for further research.

15. SUBJECT TERMS
Diversity, Inclusion, Measurements, Indicators

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